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Creating A National Passion:

Football, Nationalism, and Mass Consumerism in Modern Spain

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Creating a National Passion:
Football, Nationalism, and Mass Consumerism in Modern Spain

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Creating a National Passion:
Football, Nationalism, and Mass Consumerism in Modern Spain

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The introduction of football to Spain permanently changed the day-to-day lives of thousands of Spaniards in the century since. This dissertation is a study of how the sport entered the country and developed from the exclusive purview of the urban bourgeoisie into a massive entertainment industry. This transition occurred over a scant thirty years between 1890 and 1920 and has profoundly marked Spain's history ever since.

The first athletic communities were established in Spain because of the national self-doubt after the Spanish-American War of 1898, which led a generation of thinkers

to ask what was wrong with their country. The proponents of athletics answered that the Spanish race had degraded physically after centuries of war and struggle. In response, the urban, Spanish middle class made physical education part of their lifestyle. They organized the Federación Gimnástica Española with branches all over the country and the influential secondary school, the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, introduced physical education into its program. These thinkers borrowed the British idea of “muscular Christianity” and sought to create balance between physical strength and mental ability. As a result, significant athletic communities developed in Barcelona, Bilbao, and Madrid, which embraced numerous sports to improve their physical hygiene and as a form of conspicuous consumption.

From these athletic communities sprang groups of friends and co-workers who were interested in football. Between 1900 and 1910, the great clubs of Spain were founded and developed local identities, including F.C. Barcelona, Real Madrid C.F., and Athletic de Bilbao. As clubs grew larger, they gradually transformed into companies that catered to popular culture. In the 1910s, stadiums, stars, and sports journalists brought football into contact with the masses, seating at matches defined class distinctions, and clubs marketed their identities. Also, regulatory institutions developed such as RFEF and referee organizations that provided uniform rules to satisfy the paying fans. By 1920, everything was in place for football’s explosive growth and rise to equality with bullfighting as Spain’s most influential form of mass entertainment.

Table of Contents

List of Tables	ix
List of Illustrations	ix
List of Abbreviations	x
Comment on Club Names	xi
 Introduction:	
Athletics, Football, Nationalism, and Consumerism	1
 Chapter One:	
The Introduction and Growth of Athletic Institutions in Spain	27
Industrialization, Regeneration, and the Generation of 1898	31
The Early History of Spanish Athletics	43
Role of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza	51
Foundation and Development of the RFGE	64
Barcelona and the Cultural Implications of the Growing Sports	75
Later Development of the RFGE	86
 Chapter Two:	
The Arguments for Sport	96
Foreign Influences	101
British Public Schools	101
Gymnastics	106
The Olympic and Other International Movements	111
Racial Degeneration	115
Racial Theory	124
Balance Between Mind and Body	129
Separation of Physical Education and Sport	135
Evaluation of Different Sports	144

Women and Athletics	151
Chapter Three:	
Introduction of Football to Spain and the Age of Camaraderie	158
Huelva: A Foreign Economic Enclave	162
Bilbao: Shipping and Education	171
Barcelona: The First Football Community	184
Madrid: The Academic Introduction	205
Foundation of Atlético de Madrid	213
Other Areas	217
Chapter Four:	
The 1910s and the Age of Amateurism	220
Increasing Participation and Economic Development	222
Stadiums	232
Media	244
Stars	255
National Organization	263
Developing Identities	273
Football Outside the High-Profile Clubs	282
State of the Sport by the End of the Decade	285
Epilogue and Conclusion:	
Mass Consumerism Attained and Football Finds Its Place	289
Bibliography	299
Vita	313

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Athletic Clubs across Europe at the Turn of the Century	48
Table 2.1	World, Spanish, and Castilian Records in 1925	123

List of Illustrations

Illustration 2.1		
“Hercules Fights with the Erymanthian Boar”		
Francisco de Zurbarán		126
Illustration 2.2		
“Hercules Drunk, Being Led Away By a Nymph and a Satyr”		
Peter Paul Rubens		127
Illustration 4.1		
“San Mamés”		
José Arrúe		235
Illustration 4.2		
“Diálogo en campos de sport”		
Aurelio Arteta		260

List of Abbreviations

ACG	Asociación Catalana de Gimnástica
BILE	Boletín de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza
CNT	Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores
ILE	Institución Libre de Enseñanza
RFGE or FGE	Real Federación Gimnástica Española
RFEF	Real Federación Española de Fútbol
SGE	Sociedad Gimnástica Española (Madrid)
SPD	Sindicato de Periodistas Deportivas (Barcelona)
UGT	Unión General de Trabajadores
USFSA	Unions des sociétés françaises de sports athlétiques
UVE	Unión Velocipédica Española

Comment on Club Names

The official names of the main clubs have changed repeatedly over the years. The years prior to the Spanish Civil War were mostly free form, while during the dictatorship a strict hispanization of names was enforced. Athletic Club de Bilbao, for example, became Atlético de Bilbao and clubs had to switch from F.C. (Football Club) to C.F. (Club de Fútbol). After Franco's death most clubs switched back the "their own" names, but not all. Most obviously, while Athletic Club de Bilbao reverted to its original name, Atlético de Madrid kept its hispanized form because the club had lost most of its Basque ties. Within the text, I have striven to use the club names most common prior to the Civil War, which are generally the same as they are today. However, club histories written during the dictatorship used the hispanized versions and those are cited faithfully to their text. Therefore, there may appear to be inconsistency in some club names even when there is not.

Introduction:
Athletics, Football, Nationalism, and Consumerism

In 1937, the greatest Spanish bullfighter of the 1920s, Juan Belmonte, published his autobiography. In it he casually mentioned that he had spent his youth in Seville playing at being a bullfighter because it “was the natural thing for me to do: in those days the boys of my age did it, just as today they are always playing soccer.”¹ With this short comment, the great icon of bullfighting recognized a fundamental change in Spanish culture between 1889 and 1936. Football had become one of the most important cultural activities in the country, a shift so fundamental that it changed the dreams of little boys. It is, in fact, hard to imagine a Spain without Real Madrid, F.C. Barcelona, and Athletic de Bilbao eternally waging the regional wars of Castile, Catalonia, and the Basque Country on the football field or Seville F.C. and Real Betis Balompíe waging class warfare by proxy for the soul of Seville. Yet all of these clubs, and Spanish football itself, are a scant century old and comparatively new to Spanish identity and cultural life. How this change happened and why sport has flourished in Spain are vital questions for understanding the nation’s experience in the twentieth century. The introduction of sport reveals the successful modernization and

¹ Juan Belmonte and Manuel Chaves Nogales, *Juan Belmonte, Killer of Bulls: The Autobiography of a Matador* (New York: Double Day, 1937), 46.

development of the Spanish entertainment industry in a period dominated by perceptions of stagnation and violent discord. Football also provides a new approach to identity, nationalism, and regionalism in Spain, topics that lay at the heart of the divisions and factionalism that plagued the country. It reveals the impact of the small, but influential, urban middle-classes, so often maligned as an impotent failure because of their political weakness and inability to establish republican government. Finally, sport shows the importance of both the Liberal party and Spanish military in introducing new foreign ideas into the country as they attempted to create a “European” nation.

The period when football was introduced and blossomed in Spain ranges from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1920s, when the sport became a mature mass entertainment business. In 1890, football was almost completely unknown across the peninsula and the sight of someone kicking a football would have brought stares of confusion from anyone who passed. A few residents in the ports of Huelva, Bilbao, and Barcelona and a small number of Spaniards who had traveled or been educated abroad would have understood, but the mass of the population could have only stared at such a silly activity.

Three decades later everyone in the country knew the sport and, as Belmonte suggested, football (at the very least) rivaled bullfighting in the national spotlight and represented an important part of the nation’s cultural life. By 1929, the *Anuario de la Federación Española de Fútbol* listed 705 football clubs affiliated with the national

federation.² Spread across the country were fifteen regional federations, a national cup tournament in its twenty-seventh year, and a national league that held matches every weekend in the spring. The journalist Alonso de Caso had written the first history of Spanish football, *Fútbol: asociación y rugby*, in 1924 and six years later Joaquín Soto Barrera produced a more definitive version, *Historia del fútbol en España*. By 1930, Soto Barrera could justifiably claim that “apenas quedan sin equipo de fútbol ni un lugar insignificante..., ni barrio de ciudad secundaria..., ni calle de gran ciudad..., Tampoco falta el *team* futbolístico en ninguna profesión, liberal o no, que se tenga en algo..., ni en ninguna industria o comercio a la moderna..., ni en ningún Centro político, recreativo o cultural.”³ Quite simply, things had changed-- and fast. No longer an oddity, by 1930 football had reached into every corner of the country and had been recognized by every level of government, from local municipalities to the king. The sport had also matured into an entertainment juggernaut. It drew huge attendances at matches, supported numerous journalists and newspapers, provided conversation at cafes and bars throughout the nation, and drew towns together in Plaza Mayors from Seville to Segovia. The best players became stars commanding celebrity status and popular attention as they intermingled with bullfighters, actors, and politicians as equals.

Football's rapid expansion as a consumer activity was far from an isolated event in late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century Europe. Throughout Western Europe,

² Joaquín Soto Barrera, *Historia del fútbol en España* (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Producciones, 1930), 20.

³ Soto Barrera, *Historia*, 11-12.

first the bourgeoisie and then the working classes earned high enough incomes to allow them to spend money on things they wanted, not just things they needed. Consumer culture developed to fill that demand across Europe and the United States and gave rise to theaters, music halls, and later radio and cinema on an unprecedented scale. Other new forms of consumerism developed including department stores, mail-order catalogues, wax museums, and even morgues as paying attractions.⁴ People gravitated to whatever was interesting and exciting and the scale of consumerism grew exponentially to produce what the Spanish philosopher, José Ortega y Gasset, dubbed in 1930-- the “mass man.”⁵

Spain was able to participate in these changes because, after 1870, the Spanish economy finally began to join in the changes sweeping Europe. In the sixty years between 1870 and 1930, Catalonia and the Basque Country “took off” industrially and developed internationally-significant industrial complexes. In those cities (and on a smaller scale other northern Spanish cities as well) industrial growth produced a white-collar bourgeoisie of factory owners, managers, and engineers, while in Madrid a more intellectual and professional middle class of lawyers, educators, and white-collar government workers developed. Spain remained a primarily rural country up to the Civil War, nonetheless, urbanization developed rapidly with agricultural occupations

⁴ Numerous works address these developing forms of popular entertainment. Two of the best are Leo Charney and Vanessa R. Schwartz eds., *Cinema and the Invention of Modern Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁵ José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930; reprint, New York: Norton, 1960).

falling from 66.3 percent of the population in 1900, to 45.5 percent in 1930.⁶ Between 1900 and 1930, Barcelona grew from 533,000 people to 1,005,565, Bilbao went from 83,306 to 161,987, and Madrid rose from 539,835 to 952,832. This growth was possible because the great cities were magnets for thousands of immigrants from rural Spain. In 1892, there were 70,000 factory workers in Catalonia, but by 1930 the number had risen to 189,000, with many of them being immigrants from Andalucía and Murcia in southern Spain. Similarly, 79,000 people immigrated to the Basque Country between 1880 and 1920, almost doubling the region's population.⁷ By the start of the Spanish Second Republic, forty to sixty percent of the citizens in all of Spain's cities had been born in rural areas, marking a tremendous shift in population.⁸

In cities across Europe, new neighborhoods were built to accommodate this influx of people, especially for the new middle classes that wanted to live more comfortably, and Spain was no exception. These neighborhoods usually took the form of planned grids filled with grand avenues and impressive vistas⁹ that mirrored contemporary urban expansion across Europe, such as the Ringstrasse in Vienna and Paris in general.¹⁰ The larger Spanish cities were not left behind by these changes, and they all developed their own projects of urban expansion. In Barcelona, the Eixample

⁶ Santos Juliá, *Un siglo de España: política y sociedad* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1999), 46-48.

⁷ Adrian Shubert, *A Social History of Modern Spain* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 120, 127.

⁸ Juliá, *Un siglo de España*, 47.

⁹ Brigitte Magnien, "Cultura urbana," in *1900 en España*, eds. Serge Salaün and Carlos Serrano (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1991), 112-114.

¹⁰ Carl E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture* (New York: Vintage, 1961). Chapter 2, "The Ringstrasse, Its Critics, and the Birth of Urban Modernism," provides an excellent discussion of Vienna's pioneering development of urban, middle-class suburbs.

was built surrounding the old medieval city on three sides in the largest urban development project in the country. The city planners of Bilbao laid out the Ensanche district, which spilled westwards from the old city and onto the south bank of the Nervión River. Madrid also expanded, extending the Gran Vía to the northwest and middle-class suburbs were built across the northern edge of the city, producing the neighborhoods of Moncloa, Cuatro Caminos, and others. Even Seville expanded through numerous development projects surrounding the Exposición Iberoamericana, some of whose constructions were latter used by football clubs.¹¹ These numerous projects produced a thriving construction industry throughout Spain and drew even more immigrants to the cities to work in the industry.

Such rapid expansion initially brought a general decline in the sanitary and hygienic conditions of life in Spanish cities. Urban death rates often became comparable with those in East Asia and in 1892 Valladolid reported a death rate higher than its birth rate, a situation reminiscent of medieval cities, but very rare in modern Europe.¹² Worse yet, soldiers returning from Cuba in 1899 brought back numerous tropical diseases that further weakened urban populations. These conditions bred instability and immorality, and prostitution prospered and became a common aspect of urban life. In 1900, Madrid held upwards of 17,000 prostitutes, while in Barcelona there were so many that the young Pablo Picasso's early paintings are filled with veiled references to prostitution. Two contemporary books provided a stark image of these

¹¹ Juliá, *Un siglo de España*, 48.

¹² Magnien, "Cultura urbana," 114-118.

fears for the case of Madrid, *Madrid bajo el punto de vista médico-social* (1902) by Dr. Ph. Hauser and *La vivienda insalubre en Madrid* (1914) by Dr. César Chicote.¹³ Both works went through the neighborhoods of Madrid to identify the population densities, illness rates, and general sanitary conditions across the city. They represented the concern that existed in all of Spain's growing cities because of these generally poor living conditions. The topic struck fear into urban inhabitants and helped spur the adoption of hygienic reforms and physical education programs, because something had to be done about the situation.

Urbanization also brought political changes to the country as urban citizens strove to obtain some control over their surroundings. After the 1890s, the age of *caciquismo* gradually faded, especially in large cities like Barcelona and Bilbao. *Caciquismo* required local bosses to control the vote in their areas so that elections could be fixed and the fiction of democracy maintained. As the urban masses grew, however, controlling their votes became increasingly difficult if not impossible. Javier Tusell explains this system and its downfall in his book, *Oligarquía y caciquismo en Andalucía*.¹⁴ As their numbers increased, the only way to control the masses was with military force and that was not practical as a regular system. Between 1900 and 1930, increasing popular power played itself out most vividly in Barcelona, where street

¹³ The two works are Ph. Hauser, *Madrid bajo el punto de vista médico-socio* (Madrid: Sucesores de Rivadeneyra, 1902) and César Chicote, *La vivienda insalubre en Madrid* (Madrid: Imprenta Municipal, 1914). A more recent academic discussion of Spain's urban development around the turn of the century is María A. Castrillo Romón, *Reformismo, vivienda y ciudad: orígenes y desarrollo de un debate: España, 1850-1920* (Valladolid: Secretariado de Publicación e Intercambio Editorial, Universidad de Valladolid, 2001), 88-92.

¹⁴ Javier Tusell, *Oligarquía y caciquismo en Andalucía (1890-1923)* (Barcelona: Editorial Planeta, 1976).

violence became endemic and class politics a powerful force that turned the city into the bomb-throwing capital of the world.¹⁵

Urbanization and middle-class affluence brought positive changes to Spain as well. One of the most important of these was a rise in literacy among the population, which finally reached over fifty percent of the general population in the early 1900s. Between 1900 and 1930, literacy grew from sixty nine to ninety six percent in the Basque Country, seventy six to ninety two percent in Madrid, and forty eight to eighty two percent in Catalonia and it reached seventy percent across the nation by 1930.¹⁶ The growth of literacy and basic education brought with it the development of an increasingly important and varied newspaper press. This brought the Spanish masses into the political process and helped working class political parties develop. Beyond basic literacy, a significant minority of the population learned German, English, French and other foreign languages. This intellectual elite became increasingly interested in science and medicine, and an important intellectual community developed under the leadership of the liberal educators of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza. In 1907, the Junta de Ampliación de Estudios e Investigaciones Científicas was created to further the development of science, in general, within the country.¹⁷ Three years later, the Junta created two important institutions, the Intitutio Nacional de Ciencias Físico-Naturales, to focus on the natural sciences, and the Centro de Estudios Históricos, to

¹⁵ José Alvarez Junco, *The Emergence of Mass Politics in Spain* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2002).

¹⁶ Juliá, *Un siglo de España*, 49.

¹⁷ Juan Pablo Fusi, *Un siglo de España: la cultura* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1999), 48-49.

focus on the social sciences and humanities. Between 1912 and 1919, laboratories were established to focus on chemical physiology, physiology and the anatomy of the central nervous system, chemistry, general physiology, serology, and bacteriology. Also, before and after World War I and throughout the 1920s, Madrid and Barcelona became regular hosts for international conferences on physics, pedagogy, urbanization, architecture, and medicine. Spain even produced several internationally respected doctors, the most famous of which being Santiago Ramón y Cajal and Gregorio Marañón. All of these changes placed new importance within Spanish society on education and medical science that played an important role in legitimizing the movement for physical education.

Vibrant artistic cultures also developed that refashioned traditional Spanish practices to create modern forms building and art, and even obtained contact with the epicenter of artistic development in fin-de-siècle Europe, Paris. For example, the Catalan literary movement, *modernisme*, became a force in the 1890s and strove to build a genuinely modern Catalan culture.¹⁸ Even more importantly, Spain developed a vibrant artistic and architectural life. In Barcelona, this was epitomized by the painter Pablo Picasso and the architects Antoni Gaudí and Lluís Domènech i Montaner, who became internationally recognized figures whose works draw tourists to the city to this day.¹⁹ Although less celebrated, Bilbao and Madrid also established notable schools of

¹⁸ Arthur Terry, "Catalan Literary *Modernisme* and *Noucentisme*: From Dissidence to Order," in *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, eds. Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 55-57.

¹⁹ Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

art and architecture that produced highly respected artists. As early as the 1880s and 1890s, Spanish popular culture began changing and drawing in ever increasing numbers as well. The *zarzuela* became a popular form of theater that could be imbued with either nationalist propaganda or working-class resistance, depending on the situation.²⁰ Similarly, the *novela rosa*, serialized melodramas, entertained the masses, with some sources estimating that 2,600 of these novellas were produced and sold by the 1930s. Poster art also carved out a niche within working-class culture that developed into an extremely impressive and persuasive format for political propaganda during the Spanish Civil War.²¹ Spain's first commercial movie theater, the Cinema Lumière, was opened in Barcelona in 1896 and the first Spanish-made movie was released five years later.²² Spanish popular culture was clearly following that of Western Europe and the United States in creating a new mass consumer world.

The largest change, and indeed the trailblazer in developing mass entertainment in Spain, was bullfighting. Bullfighting, of course, has a long history, with the modern *corrida* originating in the eighteenth century, but it has traditionally been seen as a backward symbol of Spanish decadence and isolation. In *Death and Money in the Afternoon*, Adrian Shubert dramatically counters this perception and argues that bullfighting pioneered mass entertainment within the country.²³ By 1750, it had

²⁰ Serge Salaün and Carlos Serrano, eds., *1900 en España* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1991).

²¹ José Álvarez Junco, "Rural and Urban Popular Culture," in *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction*, eds. Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 82-89.

²² Fusi, *Un siglo de España*, 55.

²³ Adrian Shubert, *Death and Money in the Afternoon: A History of the Spanish Bullfight* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Introduction, 1-15.

become an entertainment industry that drew large paying crowds and made bullfighters rich and famous. In the 1870s, bullfighting experienced a powerful resurgence that reaffirmed its power as a modern cultural institution. The number of *corridos* rose dramatically and the prices of bulls and bullfighter's fees skyrocketed. In the 1910s, bullfighting reached a new height of popularity led by two of the greatest *toreros* on the modern period, José Gómez Ortega [Joselito] and Juan Belmonte.²⁴ Also by 1926, there were close to four hundred bullrings around the country (including a stadium in Barcelona with a 25,000 person capacity), and a wide variety of newspapers and periodicals dedicated to the sport. Bullfighting dominated the Spanish entertainment scene for fifty years, and football enthusiasts aspired to a similar cultural importance within the nation.

However, at the turn of the century bullfighting had a negative reputation amongst much of the Spanish liberal and intellectual elite. To the regenerationist group of writers, called the Generation of 1898, and most Spanish intellectuals of the period, bullfighting was the ultimate symbol of the decadence and isolation that were Spain's "problem." The regenerationist Europeanizer Joaquín Costa saw bullfighting as a great evil that perverted public feeling and lowered Spain in the eyes of other nations. For Ramiro de Maeztu it was a distraction that helped lead to the folly of the Spanish-American War; Pío Baroja denounced it as cowardly and brutal; and Azorín claimed it perverted the idea of valor itself. Even the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset identified

²⁴ Fusi, *Un siglo de España*, 29.

bullfighting as the clearest symptom of Spain's isolation from the rest of the world.

Many modern writers have even reaffirmed this line of thought. The literary critic Timothy Mitchell and the anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers both suggest bullfighting is something inherent in the Spanish mentality that embodies its anti-modernity.²⁵

Bullfighting, then, was not looked upon favorably by the Spanish modernizers and regenerationists who strove to open Spain to the European ideas and industry that had led to Northern Europe's global dominance.

Sport, however, fit the regenerationist agenda perfectly. Sports were foreign and generally northern European, and football and gymnastics originated in the two most powerful and industrially advanced European nations, Britain and Germany. Further, physical education aspired to "scientific" credibility by the standards of the day, using physiology and anatomy to validate its benefits. Programs of physical hygiene were embraced by medical doctors whose involvement alone emphasized the modernity of physical education. As a result, Spanish modernizers portrayed athletics as the answer to the fears of physical degeneration plaguing urban life. Introducing football and physical education, therefore, allegedly made day-to-day life in Spain more modern and similar to that of the rest of Europe, and produced stronger and healthier individuals. Cities all across Europe were developing football clubs and this created similar recreational patterns the world over, which was the sort of international community that Spanish "Europeanizers" wanted to join. What is more, those clubs interacted and

²⁵ Timothy Mitchell, *Blood Sport: A Social History of Spanish Bullfighting* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991); Julián Pitt-Rivers, "The Spanish Bullfight and Kindred Activities," *Anthropology Today*, August 1993.

competed with teams from across Europe and Latin America to test Spain's strength on the field. In the north, early Catalan and Basque teams regularly pitted themselves against French clubs and by the 1920s foreign football clubs visited Spain regularly. In 1920, Spanish football experienced its first great international moment, the national team's attainment of second place in the Antwerp Olympics, and football's popularity skyrocketed. As a result, the Spanish football community was an international one in a way that few other Spanish institutions were. The Olympic triumph launched football as a commercially-viable spectator sport that swiftly grew to rival bullfighting in the national consciousness. This is not to say that the sport had become universal in 1920. Football was not yet the force that it became during the Franco era, when it experienced a second round of growth that propelled Real Madrid into the international spotlight as Franco's "ambassadors to the world" and football served as an escape from daily life within the nation. This later era, however, was made possible by the clubs and governing bodies established between 1898 and 1920. Most notably, Spanish football prior to the Second Republic had successfully negotiated the transition from amateurism to professionalism, established a national governing body with authority over regional federations, and successfully started the league tournament to complement the annual cup tournament.

Football's international growth mirrored and spurred its growth within Spain by making the sport particularly attractive to Europeanizers. All over the world, football became part of many national cultures and clubs were created around which national,

regional, and class identities coalesced. Historians have increasingly recognized the importance of this topic over the past twenty-five years and have established numerous approaches to sport and its relationship with class, politics, and consumerism. Not surprisingly, the pioneering works on the history of athletics come from Great Britain and Germany, where football and gymnastics were codified and sport's history has received the most attention. One early approach to sport comes from the historian of nationalism, Eric Hobsbawm, in his important anthology *The Invention of Tradition*.²⁶ Hobsbawm recognizes the role British sports teams played in creating working-class identities and how national sides produced concrete symbols of national identities on the football pitch. He also discusses the roles other sports, such as tennis and golf, played in creating middle-class identities that separated them from the masses below. Richard Holt has since written a more comprehensive treatment of athletics within the British Empire in *Sport and the British: A Modern History*.²⁷ Holt discusses the amateur ideal and its relationship to the nineteenth-century British public school as well as the very different working-class sports that grew out of pubs and life on the streets, such as cockfighting and boxing. He also recognizes how sports like football and cricket came to represent "Britishness" globally, while other sports like Celtic football became icons of Irish nationalism and resistance to "Britishness."

Later books have delved deeper into these topics and explained how they played out in practice. The leading works on the development of physical education in Britain

²⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in *The Invention of Tradition*, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terrance Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

²⁷ Richard Holt, *Sport and the British: A Modern History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

remain J.A. Mangan's *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School* and Bruce Haley's *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture*, which both look in detail at the nineteenth-century rise of muscular Christianity in British public schools.²⁸ One of the best studies of sport and nationalism is Mike Cronin's *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer, and Irish Identity Since 1884*.²⁹ John Hoberman has explored the relationship between sport and politics in general in *Sport and Political Ideology* and Roland Naul has begun to flesh out the role of physical education and gymnastics in German history.³⁰

Several works also investigate the social and cultural significance of the world's largest sport in various countries. A ground-breaking work was Tony Mason's *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915*, which looks into why and how the sport first came to prominence in British society. Mason established the main topics of football history, such as the transition between amateurism and professionalism and the sport's role in identity creation.³¹ Since then, Stephen Wagg has added *The Football World*, which probes more deeply into football's growth in twentieth century Britain.³² Wagg identifies the important changes that occurred as British football

²⁸ J.A. Mangan, *Athletics in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Bruce Haley, *The Healthy Body and Victorian Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1978).

²⁹ Mike Cronin, *Sport and Nationalism in Ireland: Gaelic Games, Soccer, and Irish Identity Since 1884* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1999).

³⁰ John Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), Roland Naul, "History of Sport and Physical Education in Germany 1800-1945," in *Sport and Physical Education in Germany*, eds. Roland Naul and Ken Hardmen (London: Routledge, 2002), 15-27. Naul's is a good introduction, but the majority of studies on gymnastics have only been published in German.

³¹ Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (London: Prometheus, 1980).

³² Stephen Wagg, *The Football World: A Contemporary Social History* (London: Salem House, 1984).

became a spectator activity and the pressure to win on the local and international stages grew. He explains that working-class players emphasized factory-style teamwork, while coaches served to inculcate their players with middle-class values that made them easier to control and market. Managers gradually became important in England by enforcing moderate drinking, not sleeping around, and generally comporting oneself to the benefit of the team. Ostensibly, the reason for these measures was to bring victory on the field, but it also made the club more marketable, players more malleable, and management more powerful. Another of Wagg's works, *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics, and Culture on Five Continents*, is an anthology that discusses football's diffusion throughout the world and the process that made it the most popular competitive activity on the planet.³³ Various writers focus on how the game took on different forms in different countries and regions. They demonstrate football's versatility for identity creation because it can be adopted by any class or political group. Internationally, the sport's significance ranges from a way out of the ghetto in Brazil, to a symbol of elitism and "Europeaness" in Asia, and finally to the great clubs and cathedral-like stadiums of Italy and Spain. Most recently, Robert Edelman has studied the club Spartak Moscow to probe the mentality and experiences of the Moscow working class.³⁴ All of these works provide an excellent start for writing the history of

³³ Stephen Wagg ed., *Giving the Game Way: Football, Politics, and Culture on Five Continents* (London: Continuum, 1995).

³⁴ Robert Edelman, "A Small Way of Saying "No": Moscow Working Men, Spartak Soccer, and the Communist Party, 1900-1945," *American Historical Review* 107, no. 5, December 2002, 1441-1474.

football, but it is only a start and a full understanding of the sport's role is still developing.

In Spain, the history of football remains in the shadow of bullfighting, precisely because it is European and not an example of Spanish “uniqueness,” a topic that has been particularly important since the Franco-era tourism slogan “Spain is different” came to embody perceptions of the country. Nonetheless, there have been forays into the field of football history that usually focus on its role in Francoism and regional identity creation after the Spanish Civil War. Duncan Shaw's *Fútbol y franquismo* and Carlos Fernández Santander's *El fútbol durante la guerra civil y el franquismo* both study the role football played during the Franco regime.³⁵ Shaw details how Francisco Franco used the sport to distract the masses from poverty and economic depression during his dictatorship and, in particular, how he promoted Real Madrid C.F. towards international success. Fernández, similarly, emphasizes the sport's role as a distraction from political life and focuses on the early period of the regime. Both of these works emphasize political interaction and do not address the development of the sport itself as an independent consumer industry. Other modern approaches focus on Madrid, including rigorous biographies and club histories that are very informative, but usually straightforwardly descriptive and aimed at a popular audience. The best of these are

³⁵ Duncan Shaw, *Fútbol y franquismo* (Madrid: Alianza, 1987), Carlos Fernández Santander, *El fútbol durante la guerra civil y el franquismo* (Madrid: San Martín, 1990).

Ángel Bahamonde's *El Real Madrid en la historia de España*, Luis Prados de la Plaza's *Real Madrid centenario*, and Julián García Candau's *Bernabéu, el presidente*.³⁶

Other works focus on football's role in developing peripheral nationalisms in Catalonia and Bilbao. The most advanced on Catalonia is Joan Josep Artells's *Barça, Barça, Barça: F.C. Barcelona, esport i ciutadania*.³⁷ Although Artells is prone to dropping into a "club history" narration of events and matches, he also does an excellent job of tracking the development of F.C. Barcelona's identity and increasing affiliation with the conservative Catalan political movement. He places that connection as far back as the 1910s (not just as a development during the Franco era as many assume) and suggests that it resulted partially from the club's economic problems. The role of Athletic de Bilbao in Basque identity has been broached by Jeremy MacClancy in his article "Nationalism at Play: The Basques of Vizcaya and Athletic Bilbao."³⁸ MacClancy also emphasizes political connections, but delves into the racial significance that this took on in Bilbao, where nationalism held racial overtones and for decades only native Basques were allowed onto the team. Still, MacClancy only opens the topic and there is much more to be said about football in Basque society.

Finally, there is one journalist and writer who deserves special mention for his work on the history of Spanish football: Félix Martialay. The author of numerous

³⁶ Ángel Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid en la historia de España* (Madrid: Taurus, 2002), Luis Prados de la Plaza, *Real Madrid Centenario* (Madrid: Sílex, 2001), and Julián García Candau, *Bernabéu, el presidente* (Madrid: Espasa, 2002).

³⁷ Joan Josep Artells, *Barça, Barça, Barça: F.C. Barcelona, esport i ciutadania* (Barcelona: Editorial Laia, 1972).

³⁸ Jeremy MacClancy, "Nationalism at Play: The Basques of Vizcaya and Athletic Bilbao," in *Sport, Identity and Ethnicity*, ed. Jeremy MacClancy (Oxford: Berg, 1996), 181- 200.

books on the history of football in Spain between 1920 and 2000, Martialay's journalistic career goes back to the 1950s. The most significant books are *Amberes: allí nació la furia española*, a comprehensive discussion of the people and events surrounding the 1920 Olympic football team, and *Implantación del profesionalismo y nacimiento de la liga*, a similar discussion of the battles over professionalism and the origins of league play in 1929.³⁹ Both are exhaustive works that draw on excellent archival resources and his personal connections, but they are also fundamentally descriptive narrations of the events that only offer limited conclusions.

The goal of my work is to bring these various theories and approaches to bear on the early development of Spanish football, add new methodological approaches of my own, and understand why the sport was embraced so quickly. This is the first historical attempt to explain football's growth prior to the Spanish Civil War and contextualize it within the experiences of Spanish people with *regenerationismo*, urbanization, and modernization during the period. The goal is to identify the political, social, cultural, and nationalist motives for why, initially members of the middle classes and later individuals from the working classes, embraced football between 1890 and 1930. I argue that introducing sport into Spain was a modern approach that allowed the country to develop along with the rest of Europe. By combining approaches to the history of sport, mass entertainment, and Spanish history, we can reach a better understanding of

³⁹ Félix Martialay, *Amberes: allí nació la furia española* (Madrid: RFEF, 2000) and Félix Martialay, *Implantación del profesionalismo y nacimiento de la liga* (Madrid, RFEF, 1996).

how Spaniards created one of the most important cultural activities in their country and one of the most successful football communities in the world.

Sport rose to prominence in the western world along with a variety of other mass entertainment industries just before the turn of the century. In Spain, the groundwork for such activities had already been laid by bullfighting, but at the same time bullfighting had a reputation that many liberal, modernizing members of the Spanish middle-classes distanced themselves from. In the period surrounding the national crisis of 1898, these progressive Europeanizers turned to athletics for hygienic and pedagogical reasons and, as a result, football established a base among the urban middle-classes across the country by 1910. By that year, however, football had saturated its narrow class base and clubs recognized that they needed to be more than groups of friends to survive. In response, they began to market themselves to the Spanish masses and in so doing started to change football from a bourgeois to a working class activity.

The first chapter discusses the development of the early athletic movement, ranging loosely from 1890 to the early 1900s. In Spain, football was born into this community and, as a result, its early stages were imbued with the social values and goals of the enterprising, urban bourgeoisie. This earlier athletic community existed primarily in the three largest and most developed cities in the nation-- Madrid, Barcelona, and Bilbao. It consisted primarily of the professional and industrial middle class who were financially comfortable, had gained their affluence through education

and business, and made their livings as doctors, lawyers, journalists, entrepreneurs, and white-collar office workers. They were becoming more numerous and important as Spain gradually industrialized, with Catalan light industry and Basque iron and steel production finally becoming large-scale businesses.

The members of this small, emerging class embraced athletics as one answer to the perceived crisis of the day, national degeneration. The humiliating Spanish defeat in 1898 at the hands of the United States launched three decades of self-doubt and questioning over what had happened to the glorious kingdom of the sixteenth century. A whole generation of writers sought answers to this question, and most felt that Spain had to be “Europeanized.” Many of these thinkers also believed that the Spanish race had physically degenerated and needed to be strengthened, so they looked to European athletic and gymnastic programs and strove to imitate them. One approach came from the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (ILE), a school in Madrid that strove to introduce liberal ideas and pedagogy to Spain and included physical education, or “active learning,” as an important tenet of its ideology. A second early leader was the Federación Gimnástica Española, which was founded in Madrid, spread to every urban area in the country, and organized national meetings as early as 1899. Barcelona, in particular, developed a vibrant athletic community that mirrored the city’s famous artistic and architectural community, both of which were expressions of the city’s growing middle-classes.

Chapter two addresses the ideology that these two organizations and the burgeoning athletic community in general developed to support their cause. Athletic enthusiasts looked to the British public school ethic and the German, Swedish, and French gymnastic programs for inspiration as they developed their own programs. To emphasize their rational approach, they catalogued the causes of Spain's physical degeneration and created an "ideal Spaniard" to strive for, almost as if the whole project were a scientific experiment. The athletic movement's central tenet was developing a balance between mind and body, on the grounds that physical capability and mental skill went hand in hand. The proponents of athletics then highlighted the difference between physical education-- physical exercise with the exclusive goal of developing the body-- and sport-- athletic competition that brings physical improvement as a byproduct. With these general precepts established, the proponents of athletics discussed the costs and benefits of various sports, including football and cycling, and made recommendations about how to implant them in Spain. These theorists also discussed the role of women in athletic competition and opened a window onto gender perceptions in Spain. Most liberal thinkers cautiously supported the idea of female participation, but it was not a battle that they wanted to fight. However, even some politically liberal people, such as Gregorio de Marañón, were socially conservative and argued that sport was acceptable specifically because it reinforced "inherent" gender roles that cast men as competitors fighting to impress a malleable female audience.

Some, therefore, embraced athletics as a way to reinforce the distinctly gendered social roles that dominated Catholic Spain.

After discussing the early Spanish athletic movement and its ideology, the third chapter explores the introduction of football to Spain. As a cultural activity, football was transmitted into the country through various points of cultural contact and exchange between Spaniards and (usually British) foreigners. In Huelva, a British conglomerate purchased the Río Tinto copper mines and the engineers and other employees the company brought with them introduced the sport and taught local Spaniards to play. Barcelonans learned football through economic connections as the condal city's diverse industrial enterprises brought a wide range of foreign nationals to Barcelona, where they intermingled with the city's already vibrant athletic community. Football clubs, then, rose in popularity as they came to embody the political divisions between the pro-Catalan and pro-Madrileño sections of the middle classes. In Bilbao, there was a slightly more complex blend of contact points driven by the region's developing iron, steel, and banking companies. Shipments of iron ore and coal to Britain connected the two areas and British sailors introduced football to Bilbao's port. Basque youths were sent to Britain to learn English and mine engineering and came home with British degrees and a passion for British football. Finally, two groups introduced the sport to Madrid as well. First, the educators of the ILE taught football to several generations of students and the practice was picked up in *colegios* around the city, thereby connecting the sport to the Spanish Liberal Party. Second, the significant Basque community

within Madrid began playing football, as people who had learned the game at home in the Basque Country migrated to the capital and brought the sport with them. These various avenues introduced football and most of the country's important clubs were founded as small groups of bourgeois friends who organized societies that every member helped to fund and compete.

In chapter four, I discuss football's development from its bourgeois origins towards a commercial, spectator activity. During the 1910s, the sport developed its first working-class following and everything about the game began to change. Teams were founded everywhere in Spain and the larger clubs developed into profitable ventures. The first stadiums were built to hold and control a mass audience and a sporting press developed, with several sport exclusive publications and regular sections within broadsheets. Football produced its first stars with one or two players gaining fame in each city, while some coaches and sports journalists became recognized figures as well. This new popularity brought changes to the sport, as it transformed itself into a regulated form of entertainment. National and regional federations were founded and gradually assumed power within the football world, along with impartial referee organizations that guaranteed legitimate on-field competition. Also, clubs developed local identities that represented different classes, neighborhoods, and cities, which spurred interest and created imagined communities of sports fans that supporters could join for the price of a ticket. This sort of vicarious identity drew in thousands and helped football penetrate beyond the Spanish middle-classes. These preparations for

mass consumerism also brought problems, because they undermined the original values and goals of the athletics movement. What happened to the amateur ideal of sport for physical fitness and regeneration when football fans attended matches as entertainment without playing themselves?

This whole spectrum of sports development illustrates how much social and cultural change Spain experienced between 1890 and 1920. The country's economic development was limited, yet cultural change only needed regular contact with the rest of Europe, which even Spain's limited economic success could bring. As Spanish cities grew, the urban middle classes and working classes needed new activities through which to define themselves, so they turned to modern European cultural forms. This made the urban middle classes trendsetters within the country, despite their political weakness. One of these new activities was sport, and particularly football, which became a new form of conspicuous consumption. However, within two decades, the new activity was emulated by the working classes whose resources and free time expanded after 1920. Such emulation reveals the substantial cultural power that even a small bourgeoisie wielded, even if it could not control the cultural trends it started. By the 1920s, the interest of the working classes in football forced many within the Spanish middle classes to flee into upper middle class and aristocratic forms of recreation, such as auto racing, tennis, and flying airplanes. In comparison, the conversion of football into a spectator sport invited working-class participation and reduced its value as a form of conspicuous consumption. In the first decades of the twentieth century the world

was becoming more modern and international and the “mass man” was demanding his share of the spoils. Even in the supposedly isolated European “backwoods” of Spain, nothing could halt that process, and the old country became culturally modern.

Chapter One:

The Introduction and Growth of Athletic Institutions in Spain

“...el mejoramiento físico, moral é intelectual del pueblo Español ó sea esa regeneración tan anhelada como justa, tan decantada cómo necesaria.” So spoke Salvadore López Gómez to inaugurate the 4th national assembly of the Federación Gimnástica Española (FGE) in 1902.¹ That conference, and the three annual meetings and festivals prior to it, represented the first important watershed when Spanish athletics became a national movement with a role to play in the national culture. López read these words in front of delegates from gymnastic societies representing every significant urban area in Spain who gathered together to organize and promote the FGE. The speakers included politicians, doctors, professors, and gymnasium owners who argued for a variety of social and governmental reforms through which they believed the Spanish race could be regenerated. These varied participants developed rational physical exercise programs, rallied for government support, and used medical science to determine the most beneficial activities for both youths and adults. As a result, they created within Spain a community interested in the promotion and development of athletics to the benefit of the country and the race.

As Federico Reparaz wrote looking back in 1924 “ricas en alentadoras promesas

¹ Salvador López Gómez, *Cuarta Asamblea General de la Federación Gimnástica Española* (Sevilla: El Mercantil, Francisco de P. Díaz, 1902), 5-6.

de todo especie, como grandes viveros de la nueva España, han levantado, entre otras, la bandera de deporte. Fue primero el foot-ball, más tarde el tennis...”² Reparaz did not have the order of the sports right, but the spirit of development was correct. In particular, cycling, track and field, swimming, and football became popular, middle-class forms of recreation around which both competitive and social clubs were organized. As a result, by 1913 there were three hundred and seventy one sporting societies across Spain with the majority dedicated to football or cycling. The largest concentrations were in Madrid (twenty-seven clubs), Valencia (twenty-six clubs), and Barcelona (seventy-one clubs).³ The core groups interested in the new activity were the urban middle-classes and particularly white-collar professionals, businessmen, and academics whose social prestige placed them closer to the upper bourgeoisie. All three groups became increasingly important between 1890 and 1930 as the Spanish economy modernized and they needed to carve out identities for themselves within society. These groups were also predisposed to have connections and mentors outside of Spain from which they drew their interest in sport. The athletic movement received consistent political support from the Spanish Liberal party that was most open to modernizing or “Europeanizing” the country. Successive Liberal Prime Ministers, Ministers of Education, and Ministers of Development instituted a variety of programs for physical education, but the government could only provide limited funding and state action had

² Federico Reparaz, *Deportes Atlético*s (Madrid: Calpe [Biblioteca de Deportes] 1924), 10.

³ Marcelo Sanz Romo, *Ensayo de una higiene deportiva o los deportes ante la higiene* (Madrid: La Correspondencia Militar, 1913), 11.

corresponding minimal effects. Liberal-minded reformers in the Spanish military also took an interest in programs of physical education starting in the second half of the nineteenth century. Although somewhat separated from civilian development, the Spanish army introduced limited gymnastics programs into its academies, and eventually even football itself. These changes reflected their obvious interest in the physical well being of their soldiers, an embarrassing problem during the Spanish-American War, and the military's interest remained a permanent presence in the Spanish athletic world throughout the period.

Spanish thinkers of the time also struggled with the question that plagued the nation for years after the 1890s-- how to regenerate the Spanish people. The goal of national regeneration dominated national discussion as the failure against the United States in the Spanish-American War of 1898 sparked several decades of questioning and a generation of writers called the 'Generation of 98.' The first section of this chapter will explain this vital context of *regeneracionismo*. The promoters of athletics sought to revitalize the nation and, therefore, anyone interested in *regeneracionismo* could easily embrace the new foreign activity. The second section of the chapter discusses the sporadic early attempts to introduce athletics to Spain in the nineteenth century. These attempts were driven primarily by the Spanish Liberal party, once it gained regular turns in the government, but they generally failed to produce much change. After this background, I discuss the development of the two most important institutions, the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (ILE) and FGE, and their roles in

turning athletics into a social activity with significant importance to the Spanish middle-classes. Section three then addresses the importance of athletics in the academic reform and goals of the ILE that educated a generation of the Spanish intellectual elite, including many liberal politicians. Correspondingly, section four explains the foundation and early development of the Sociedad Gimnástica Española (SGE) by Narciso Masferrer and his three companions in Madrid and the development of that society into the national FGE and the first national conferences and festivals. The discussion of the earliest national festivals leads into a more detailed analysis of the first important athletic community in Spain, Barcelona in the 1890s and 1910s. The case of Barcelona reveals the connections between athletic and artistic communities that existed in Madrid and Bilbao as well. Both groups represented two different forms of conspicuous consumption through which the urban middle classes strove to forge their own identity that was distinct from the working class. Finally, I carry the history of the FGE up to its final watershed in the 1920s when it became a truly large scale and successful endeavor.

Explaining the development of the early Spanish athletic movement contextualizes the social environment from which football originated. The sport began as a footnote in the greater sports communities of Barcelona, Madrid, and Bilbao and was originally viewed as a game played by foreigners. As such, football's early practice was evaluated based on its ability to improve the nation and as a minor part of the general athletic movement. This historic placement is vitally important because few

leaders of Spanish athletics were associated with only one sport in the period between 1900 and 1920, such as Narciso Másferrer who founded the SGE in Madrid and then wrote for numerous newspapers during his journalistic career in Barcelona. Almost all prominent supporters of physical education had some connection to the rapidly developing sport of football and played a role in its development, while many others played important political roles within their communities. Perhaps the clearest example of this is that while F.C. Barcelona, R.C.D. Español, Catala, and the other early Catalan football clubs were founded by different groups of friends, almost all of them were initially organized and held meetings in the same gymnasium, Gimnasio Solé, the local branch of the FGE.

Industrialization, Regeneration, and the Generation of 1898

Many Spaniards embraced athletics because of the ongoing national crisis at the turn of the century. Over the course of the 1890s, it became clear to everyone that Spain had failed to modernize and industrialize along with the rest of Western Europe. Industry was just beginning to play a significant role in the Spanish economy, but this centered almost entirely on pockets of development centered on Barcelona's textile production and Bilbao's nascent iron refining. Similarly, the mining enclaves of Bilbao, Asturias, and Río Tinto (Andalucía) were beginning to produce substantial amounts of iron ore, coal, and copper, but used outdated techniques and were generally foreign-owned. Even this enclave industrialization was a recent development during the

last quarter of the nineteenth century and served almost as much to highlight the nation's industrial weakness as provide it with strength. Such enclaves contrasted painfully with both the rest of the Spanish countryside and the vastly more advanced and larger scale industrial development of Britain, France, and Germany.

Such weakness and underdevelopment produced a period of severe self-analysis and criticism in turn-of-the-century Spain. Politicians of all persuasions, journalists, priests, writers and anyone else who put pen to paper or waxed eloquent in a cafe strove to explain what had caused the nation's degradation and degeneration and how to fix it. Discussions of regeneration permeated every forum imaginable ranging from political debates, to neighborhood cafes, to literature and led to a desire for political reform over the course of the 1890s. The Countess Emilia Pardo Bazán presented the problem wonderfully through an allegory.⁴ She joked that a duke who had put on a suit of armor and cannot get it off when he wants to was like Spain, which had embraced the trappings of its imperial past, but outgrown them and become trapped in a quixotic, outdated model. Balfour elaborates that the suit of armor represents technological backwardness, the insular claustrophobia of Spanish society, and the outgrown and limiting institutions of the Spanish state, making the allegory poignant and painfully clear.

Such concern about national decadence and fears of national backsliding were by no means particular to Spain in nineteenth century Europe. In Britain, the members

⁴ Sebastian Balfour, *End of the Spanish Empire 1898-1923* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 64.

of the anti-imperialist ‘Little England’ movement were worried about racial degradation in that nation’s cities. On the continent, the French population experienced a serious bout of national self doubt after their defeat in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1, which spurred the revival of reactionary nationalism and the xenophobia of the Dreyfus case in the 1890s.⁵ As Robert Nye has explained, the fear of national decline was validated by the French medical community that provided a “scientific” justification for political fears, a situation that would be loosely repeated by the Spanish medical community and the Liberal party in Spain.⁶ Denouncing national decadence was not new to Spain prior to the 1890s. Two Carlist wars in the countryside and the disastrous experience of the Spanish First Republic in 1873, which spiraled into the cantonalist movement, had seriously undermined the faith of progressive leaders in political action. The quietly drifting cynicism of the early Restoration period (1875- to roughly 1900) only drove home the lack of faith in political reform as Antonio Cánovas de Castillo and Práxedes Mateo Sagasta operated a falsely democratic system run by two political parties which took turns fixing elections. This political system, called *caciquismo*, provided a democratic fiction for the outside world, but allowed the elite to maintain control through local (and most effectively rural) leaders who controlled votes through client relationships.⁷ While blatantly corrupt, the Restoration government provided a

⁵ See Eugene Weber, *France: Fin de siècle* (Cambridge, Mass: Cambridge UP, 1986), 9-26.

⁶ Robert A. Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁷ The best works on *caciquismo* are Javier Tusell, *Oligarquía y caciquismo en Andalucía, 1890-1923* (Barcelona, 1976); José Varela Ortega, *Los amigos políticos: partidos, elecciones y caciquismo en la Restauración (1875-1900)* (Madrid: Alianza, 1977); and José Varela Ortega, *Elecciones, alternancia y*

period of governmental stability and peace the nation needed after the 1870s.

Nonetheless, the Spanish Liberal Party managed to push through some significant pieces of legislation that would become more important over time. The two most important steps were the legalization of associations in 1887 and the acceptance of universal suffrage in 1890. The primary historical importance of the *ley de asociaciones* was its legalization of working-class political parties and trade unions, which allowed such institutions to exist legally for the first time.⁸ The law allowed Spaniards to freely form societies or associations as long as they did not undermine the nation's "moral life." The requirements were that the society had to register with the local government, establish a public constitution that explained its goals, and provide ground rules for its internal organization. As long as they remained small, sports groups were not strictly required to register and many did not over the years. However, once a club took on a public persona and reached a high level of participation it did become a requirement. Essentially, registration under the *ley de asociaciones* provided sports clubs with a legal right to exist and served as recognition by the government that their goal was positive and beneficial to the nation. This recognition was particularly important because of the rationale that physical education would help revitalize the nation. Nonetheless, by the twentieth century the Restoration governments were

democracia: España-México, una reflexión comparativa (Madrid : Biblioteca Nueva, 2000).

⁸ Antonio Buj Buj, "La cuestión urbana en los informes de la Comisión de Reformas Sociales," in *Ciencia e ideología en la Ciudad (II). I Coloquio Interdepartamental Valencia, 1991*, eds. Horacio Capel, José María López Piñero and José Pardo (Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana/Conselleria d'Obres Públiques, Urbanisme i Transports, 1994), 73-86. Also available in the Universidad de Barcelona's online journal *Scripta Vetera: Edición Electrónica de Trabajos Publicados sobre Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*.

becoming painfully repressive and stifled attempts at real political participation and movements for change.

These ideas and problems existed as a general feeling of discontent throughout the 1890s, but were crystallized into a desire for action by Spain's humiliating defeat at the hands of the United States in the spring of 1898. Up to that point, most of Spain's citizens had hoped that the situation was not as bad as it appeared. There had been improvements in the 1890s, with Spain producing its first railroad engines and ironclad ships and the Basque iron and coal industries having clearly improved. However, when the Spanish Atlantic Squadron under Admiral Cervera y Topete was wiped out with 323 killed and 151 wounded by an American fleet under Admiral William Sampson that lost one sailor in the engagement on July 3, 1898-- hope no longer remained.⁹

What did remain was finally coming to grips with the nation's fall from power, after almost a century of denial, and looking for ways to fix Spain's problems. The movement that developed strove to 'regenerate' the nation and return Spain to the glory and power it held during the two centuries following the discovery of the New World by Columbus in 1492.¹⁰ For many thinkers, *regenerationismo* required reflection upon the "soul" of the country, the significance of the nation's history, and what Spain

⁹ Balfour, *Spanish Empire*, 37.

¹⁰ There is a large amount of literature and historiography that deal with the regeneration movement, the effects of the events of 1898, and the writers of the Generation of 1898 who developed afterwards. Good works on the topic include Juan Pablo Fusi and A. Niño eds., *Vísperas del 98: orígenes y antecedentes de la crisis del 98* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1997), Juan Pan-Montojo ed., *Más se perdió en Cuba: España, 1898 y la crisis de fin de siglo* (Madrid: Alianza, 1998), Cristóbal Robles Muñoz, *1898: diplomacia y opinión* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1991), Rafael Sánchez Mantero ed., *En torno al "98": España en el tránsito del siglo XIX al XX*, 2 vols. (Huelva: Universidad de Huelva, 2000).

needed to become.¹¹ Lucas Mallada's *Los males de la patria y la futura revolución*, Miguel de Unamuno's *En torno de casticismo*, and Ángel Ganivet's *Idearium español* all strove to identify what Spain and the Spanish race should embody, even before the events of 1898.¹² The war provided popular support for these attempts at reform that drew heavily on middle-class intellectuals and leaders who suggested a variety of reforms from all sections of the political landscape. Numerous books were written in the years after 1898 that analyzed the causes for the defeat and sought for answers to solve the nation's "problem." Between 1898 and 1901, Joaquín Costa wrote *Reconstrucción y europeización de España* and *Oligarquía y caciquismo*, Ricardo Macías Picavea penned *El problema nacional*, Luis Morote produced *La moral de la derrota*, and Rafael Altamira completed *Psicología del pueblo español*.¹³ These books, and others, continued to develop archetypes of the Spaniard and generally looked to Europe and the Americas for ways to revitalize the race and the nation. As time passed, regenerationist thought increasingly emphasized the importance of embracing science and medicine to revitalize the nation. As early as 1906, José Ortega y Gasset asserted directly that "Europe = science" and, in that same year, Dr. Santiago Ramón y Cajal won the Nobel Prize in Medicine for his studies on the structure of the human nervous

¹¹ Juan Pablo Fusi, *Un siglo de España: la cultura* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 1999).

¹² Lucas Mallada, *Los males de la patria y la futura revolución* (Madrid: Manual Gines Hernández, 1890), Miguel de Unamuno, *En torno de casticismo* (1895; reprint, Madrid: Alianza, 2000), Ángel Ganivet, *Idearium español* (1897; reprint, Salamanca: Almar, 1999).

¹³ Joaquín Costa, *Reconstitución y europeización de España* (1899; reprint, Madrid: Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, 1981), Joaquín Costa, *Oligarquía y caciquismo* (1902; reprint, Madrid: Alianza, 1984), Ricardo Macías Picavea, *El problema nacional* (1899; reprint, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1996), Luis Morote, *La moral de la derrota* (1900; reprint, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1997), Rafael Altamira, *Psicología del pueblo español* (1901; reprint, Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 1997).

system.¹⁴ Science and medicine became an increasingly important focus within Spain over the 1910s and 1920s as a way to modernize and Europeanize the nation. Reformers put forward comprehensive plans of public works to develop infrastructure that included developing irrigation schemes, funding agrarian credit plans, decentralizing government, increasing investment in education, reforming the judiciary, establishing a social security system, and extending canal and railway networks to improve communication and transport. Connected to these mostly economic proposals were political ones that demanded electoral reform to abolish *caciquismo*. The reformers also wanted to obtain money for state economic investment by reducing military and bureaucratic spending that were rife with fraud and produced little.

These reformers strove to make Spain more like the successful nations of northern Europe and often openly described their goal as “Europeanization.” The most powerful reform leader was Joaquín Costa, a graduate of the ILE from mountainous Aragon, who provides a symbol for the confusion and contradiction within *regeneracionismo*. Costa fought primarily for radical reform in the countryside by building public irrigation systems, opening new markets in Africa, and collectivizing peasant action, yet he saw these reforms as a defense of tradition and an attempt to retain the world of the small farmer typical in northern Spain.¹⁵ Costa fought hard in the years after 1898 to organize a new political party that fought for regenerationist ideals on behalf of workers and peasants. He organized a Producers’ Assembly in late

¹⁴ Fusi, *Un siglo de España*, 48-49.

¹⁵ Balfour, *Spanish Empire*, 72-3.

1898 to promote the goals of reform that developed into a Chambers of Commerce movement that focused on his ideas, but failed to develop beyond short-term lobbying. Eventually the Chambers movement fizzled as middle-class enthusiasm waned and socialist leaders, including Pablo Iglesias, founder of the Socialist party, denounced the movement as bourgeois.¹⁶ By 1902, the regenerationist movement as political action had mostly failed. In desperation, Costa posited the idea of an “iron surgeon,” essentially a powerful dictator who could break through the political immobility of the government and enforce reform. Despite his liberal goals, therefore, Costa eventually embraced a reactionary method for reform and retired, dispirited, to his home in Aragon.

Part of the difficulty Costa’s movement faced was that numerous other groups had their own answers to the nation’s failure. Conservative Catholic traditionalists argued that the nation had failed in 1898 because it had drifted away from its ideals and national identity. To conservatives, modern European reforms represented cancerous foreign ideas that had infiltrated Spanish cities and produced national weakness by corrupting the hallowed traditions and beliefs of the Spanish imperial age. The thinker Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, for example, defended this glorification of Spanish imperial history, the national literature and their role as the source of Spanish strength. From his appointment as chair of Spanish literature in 1877, his role as director of the National Library, particularly from the 1890s until his death in 1912, Menéndez y

¹⁶ *El Imparcial*, 13 March 1899.

Pelayo dedicated himself to the collection and maintenance of Spanish literary classics and sought to make the national tradition available to everyone.¹⁷ He helped turn the great images of the past like Columbus, El Cid, and the Catholic Kings into national icons and models to be followed to enforce conservative values. Conservative Catholic thought, then, saw attempts to modernize Spain as the source of the national problem and fought for a reassertion of Catholic education and the veneration of these symbols. Although both the political left, embodied by Costa, and the political right, represented by Menéndez y Pelayo, sought regeneration after the Spanish-American War, they envisioned very different ways to achieve this and largely cancelled one another out. Nonetheless, *regeneracionismo* remained an important movement for almost thirty years after 1898 and continued to influence the thinking of most leading intellectuals in the country, including Miguel de Unamuno, Ramiro de Maeztu, Pío Baroja, Azorín, and José Ortega y Gasset.¹⁸

Regeneracionismo also became popular again in the late 1910s and 1920s, as the Restoration system fell apart and working-class unions developed across the country. In Barcelona, the anarchist Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT) rapidly increased in numbers, while in Madrid and the industrial northern coast the socialist Unión General de Trabajadores (UGT) rose to political importance. Both working class unions demanded a voice and organized strikes and street fighting that repeatedly

¹⁷ Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, *Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856-1912)* (Madrid: Fortanet, 1914), 169-174.

¹⁸ A good discussion of the intellectual effects of 1898 is Juan Carlos Sánchez Illán, *La nación inacabada: los intelectuales y el proceso de construcción nacional (1900-1914)* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2002).

paralyzed the Spanish government. Between 1917 and 1923, sixteen different governments were formed as the political instability reached its peak and it became clear that something would have to be done to provide stability. In response, General Primo de Rivera launched a coup in 1923 and established himself as a self-styled *regeneracionista* dictator. Primo strove to be the “iron surgeon” Costa had envisioned, by breaking through the government’s gridlock, creating peace in the streets, and forcing through numerous reforms.

These events are traditionally viewed negatively in Spanish historiography because of the failure to enact the political, economic, and institutional changes traditionally recognized as the hallmarks of development. Historians have concentrated on the air of discontent and disillusion among the progressive intellectuals and middle classes, the development of working class organizations, and the deterioration of the institutions of the government that developed in the 1910s and 1920s. However, these events also brought a resurgence of *regeneracionista* thought. Included among these was the smaller campaign for physical regeneration, which mostly avoided the battle over what the nation represented and could be assimilated first into urban, middle-class life, and then into the working classes, without being seen as a threat to the political status quo.

The introduction and expansion of athletics and physical culture was one of these smaller campaigns for national regeneration that drew support both in the years directly after 1898 and throughout the 1910s and 1920s. Advocates of physical

education like Narciso Másferrer and the professors of the ILE sought to revitalize the Spanish race by making it physically strong and capable through rational gymnastic activity and practice. As Salvadore López Gómez suggested in the 1902 conference of the FGE, they wanted to create a strong body in which to develop strong minds. Or as López had phrased it earlier at the 1900 conference, the “manera de armonizar la educación física con la intelectual y la moral durante todo el período educativo, desarrollando la educación integral.”¹⁹ López, a teacher from Seville, argued that defending the *patria* required the brain, the arm, and the heart and that physical exercise developed all three. He even referred specifically to shooting and military gymnastics as important means of producing capable new Spaniards. López concluded with the metaphor that trying to rebuild Spain without developing the citizens of the nation physically would be like constructing a building without laying the foundation.

In fact, almost every proponent of physical education seized upon *regenerationismo* during the years directly after 1898. The argument implanted modern ideas drawn from England, Germany, and France and thus satisfied liberal modernizers, but it also emphasized classical ideas of physical culture and masculine, military gymnastics that made it acceptable to conservatives as well. Throughout the fin-de-siècle period, supporters of athletics fought for the inclusion of physical exercise in schools and emphasized its role in developing youths in particular. They defended this

¹⁹ Salvadore López Gómez, *Segunda Asamblea General de la Federación Gimnástica Española* (Sevilla: El Mercantil, Francisco de P. Díaz, 1900), 5-8, 13. The idea of “harmonizing” the physical and the mental in education is even promoted by López as the theme of the conference.

goal with every resource they could find, from scientific literature and medical papers to connections between the mind and the body set forth by the ancient Greeks. They reinforced their “scientific” approach with anatomical and pedagogical discussions of all the popular sports of the time and the physical and moral advantages and disadvantages that they provided. For example, they defended team competitions by calling upon the ancient world, finding corollaries in the educational systems of Britain, and making connections to the modern Olympic movement. Independent societies were founded throughout the nation to promote and organize specific sports as well as a larger umbrella organization for the development of gymnastics and sport in general, the RSGE.

Physical regeneration remained important as the Restoration system gradually disintegrated and Barcelona, in particular, devolved into urban violence. In this period, arguments for physical regeneration were refined and supporters increasingly applied medical science to validate their arguments. In 1919, Doctor Joaquín Decref lectured on the continuing “necesidad de organizar e implantar en España los laboratorios de deportes.”²⁰ His ideas were well received by a wide and educated audience at the meetings of the Sociedad Española de Gimnástica held in Seville and he later had his lecture published by the Biblioteca de Vida y Ciencia. In fact, the Biblioteca de Vida y Ciencia itself was a series of publications that focused primarily on the health and welfare of the nation and its existence alone reflected the resurgent interest in physical

²⁰ Joaquín Decref y Ruiz, *Necesidad de implantar en España los laboratorios de deportes: conferencia dada en La Sociedad Española de Gimnástica* (Sevilla: Tipografía “La Exposición,” 1919).

education. Similarly in *Educación física* in 1925, Emilio Poras argued that although strides had been taken, more needed to be done for Spain to physically recover and again become important in the world. The nation had clearly advanced and changed significantly from the 1890s in its approach to physical culture, but the impulse towards physical regeneration continued through the early 1920s.

The Early History of Spanish Athletics

The story of Spanish athletics starts in the second half of the nineteenth century, when there were sporadic attempts to introduce forms of athletics and gymnastic exercise into Spain through military and academic institutions. Few of these had much effect, but they reveal two important groups that were interested in introducing and using physical culture, the Liberal political party and progressive individuals within the Spanish military. In 1853, gymnastics was introduced into the Escuela de Ingenieros Militares and later in the Toledo military academy as a means of keeping officers physically fit and able to lead the country.²¹ Similarly, shooting schools were opened across the nation to promote better skill and training among the military. Gymnastics and shooting were two forms of physical education that it was natural for the military to embrace, and in Germany there was a parallel development of military gymnastics and shooting clubs in the mid-1800s. By 1878-79, another traditional form of competition, horseracing, drew interest from various groups in Madrid and the first hippodrome was

²¹ Rafael Rodríguez Ruiz, *Estudio de la gimnástica desde punto de vista de la higiéfica pública* (Barcelona: Tipografía 'La Academia,' 1902), 79-81.

built in the capital off of Calle Castellana. The work was supported by King Alfonso XII and the third Count of Toreno, who was Minister of Development at the time, and its location in the wealthy northern region of the city reflected the aristocratic and high bourgeois nature of its supporters. At a cost of 4,651,311 pesetas, they built a track on 17,236 square meters of land with the stated goal of “the improvement of the [Spanish] race.” It provided a valuable precedent for building all sorts of grounds for athletic competitions in Madrid.²²

These minor, but significant, early brushes with various forms of physical training by the crown and the military were early examples of the military regeneration that was part of Spain’s complex mix of ideologies. Despite the later ultra-conservative, Catholic image of the Spanish military that resulted from Franco’s dictatorship, the Spanish military had a tradition of liberalism in the nineteenth century. The revolution of 1868 largely resulted from military involvement, so it is not surprising that sporadic attempts to institute European gymnastic programs and shooting schools were made within the Spanish military over the second half of the nineteenth century. Nor did this tradition entirely disappear in the early twentieth century.²³ One of the most important late-Restoration generals, Ricardo Burguete, was a strong admirer of Nietzsche, the theory of vitalism, and other new European ideas. He gained a reputation as member of the Generation of ’98, which allowed him to break the barriers

²² Marcelo Sanz Romo, *Ensayo de una higiene deportiva o los deportes ante le higiene* (Madrid: La Correspondencia Militar, 1913), 122.

²³ Geoffrey Jensen, *Irrational Triumph: Culture of Despair, Military Nationalism, and the Ideological Origins of Franco’s Spain* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002), 5-16, 18-129.

between military and civilian thought. Similarly, Enrique Ruiz-Fornells was an important turn-of-the-century military leader with a liberal and scientific approach that echoed physical regeneration. He played a prominent role in military pedagogy, emphasized the importance of “military morals,” and made arguments very similar to those of British muscular Christianity and French gymnastics. He emphasized that the military should imbue morals in its soldiers, just as the French believed gymnastics and exercise did in its participants. Ruiz-Fornells’ “European” and scientific outlook even led him to be a co-founder of the Escuela Central de Tiro, a gunnery school that emphasized the importance of active practice.

This strain of military thought meant that some in the Spanish army were willing to embrace new programs of athletics and physical education concurrently with the civilian population. As a result, military organizations and their institution of athletic programs between 1890 and 1930 recurred regularly on the fringes of civilian developments as participants in the developing athletic world. In fact, one of the most important and prolific early proponents of sport, Marcelo Sanz, had strong military ties. Sanz ran a gymnasium in Madrid located just off of the calle del Prado, one of the best neighborhoods in the city.²⁴ He named the gym “Gimnasio higiénico y sala de armas,” emphasizing both the regenerationist, hygiene angle and the militaristic tradition. At least one of Sanz’s books was published by *La Correspondencia Militar*, and he regularly employed military language and metaphors while writing. Essentially, he

²⁴ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 125.

provided a bridge between the civilian and military athletic communities by catering to both worlds and making clear that both supported the athletic movement to some degree.

Various Liberal governments in the early Restoration period also took an interest and enacted a series of official establishments that promoted the development of athletics from the late 1870s onward and opened the door to the major developments after 1898. In 1883, Práxedes Mateo Sagasta's Liberal government obtained a Royal Decree approving the idea of a school to produce gymnastics teachers. On April 1, 1887, the Escuela Central de Gimnástica opened in Madrid under the direction of Doctor Mariano Marcos Ordax, with the support of the Liberal party.²⁵ The school only lasted five years, closing in 1892 because of a lack of paying participants, but it established Ordax's reputation and prominence in athletic endeavors and trained the first generation of physical education teachers in Spain. Then during another Sagasta government from 1892 to 1895, Segismundo Moret, as Minister of Development, brought real governmental power to bear in favor of physical education. Moret was one of the leading Liberal politicians of the period and later became prime minister himself in 1905, 1906, and 1909. He was also a founder and president of the ILE and is a good example of the connections between the democratic wing of the Liberal Party and the movement for educational reform. First, Moret used a royal decree to establish ten

²⁵ Ricardo Gurriarán Rodríguez, *Aportación de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza a la educación física del siglo XIX* (Santiago de Compostela: Tórculo Artes Gráficas, 1996), 49-50; Pedro Zorrilla Sanz, *La educación física en la enseñanza secundaria pública a través de los programas de formación de profesorado (1883-1936)* (Madrid: Doctoral Thesis Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2000).

Catedráticos de Gimnástica in the Institutos Cabeza de Distrito Universitario. Then in September 1893, he extended support to the gymnastics professors by granting them 2,000 pesetas at the university level and 1,000 pesetas at lower levels. Moret even went beyond the appointment of professors of gymnastics and attempted to make gymnastics obligatory in all the *institutos* of the nation for the 1893-4 year, establishing two excursions monthly for students (basically field trips), and calling for the establishment of rules for hygienic education.²⁶ Two decrees in 1894 clarified the rights and categories of Professors of Gymnastics and the requirements for study of the subject, these rules were further amended in 1895 and 1896.²⁷ This was all part of Moret's general secondary school reforms that included nearly tripling the number of required courses for students, including classes in the sciences and civics, and establishing annual courses in mathematics and languages.²⁸ Although most of Moret's reforms were repealed in 1895, when the Conservative Party returned to power, but during the years between 1895 and 1901 there was another barrage of Royal decrees, orders, and acts by Liberal governments that further developed and regulated gymnastic activities in schools. The Liberal Party, therefore, recognized the value of athletics and strove to implement them, but official decrees alone could not bring physical education into practice. In particular, these acts (like most educational decrees of the period) all had a very limited effect because the Conservative leaders either removed or under funded the

²⁶ Gurriarán Rodríguez, *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, 50. These goals were embodied in Real Orden 1-IX-1893.

²⁷ Miguel Piernavieja del Pozo, *El libro deportivo español* (Madrid: Imp. Vda. 1965).

²⁸ Carolyn Boyd, *Historia Patria: Politics, History, and National Identity in Spain, 1875-1975* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 37-38.

programs when they were in power. Therefore, attempts at reform through government action swung back and forth depending on which party was in power.

This limited and sporadic government support for physical education in Spain contrasted starkly with the development of athletics in other Western European countries and even in Japan. Rafael Rodríguez Ruíz made this point explicitly in his 1902 dissertation *Estudio de la gimnástica desde punto de vista de la higiénica publica*. Rodríguez went into depth discussing the development of gymnastic programs in Germany, Belgium, Denmark, France, Holland, Switzerland, and Japan, all benefiting from government subsidies.

	1898	1899	1900
Belgium	137	141	538
Austria	483	503	538
France	530	544	640
Switzerland	493	521	539
Italy	104	104	104
Hungary	45	45	45
Netherlands	111	130	133
Norway	25	30	35
Sweden	15	15	15

Table 1.1 Athletic Clubs across Europe at the Turn of the Century ²⁹

This table lists the numbers of athletic societies in various countries at the end of the century, and he estimated that in Switzerland there was one athletic club for every 82

²⁹ Rafael Rodríguez Ruíz, *Estudio de la gimnástica desde punto de vista de la higiénica publica* (Barcelona: Tipografía 'La Academia,' 1902), 67.

people and in Germany one club for every 91 people.³⁰ Clearly, Spain was far behind the rest of Europe in developing athletic societies and Rodríguez, at least, laid the blame squarely on the lack of government support.

The journalistic community was also becoming interested in sports in the 1890s. The first newspaper, *El Gimnasta*, was the Sociedad Gimnástica Española's (SGE) early organ/newsletter and began publication in 1887. In 1889, a new newspaper, *El Sport*, appeared and survived until 1892, while in 1893 two more newspapers, *El Pelotari* and *Crónica de Sport*, began publication, with the latter newspaper surviving until at least 1896. A new round of athletically oriented newspapers appeared in the last years of the 1890s and early 1900s that would become important in the early movement. Included among these were *Los Deportes* (1897) and its early rival *Barcelona Sport*, while in Madrid, *Arte y Sport* (1903) and *Gran Mundo y Sport* (1906) appeared. Most of these small newspapers did not survive very long and only produced editions two or three times a month, but as time went on they became increasingly successful and the many different ventures demonstrated that a significant market for sports publications was developing, even if it was not yet a mature one. It is also notable that almost all of these reviews used the English word "sport" in their title, providing a clear example of the foreign influences athletics represented. The most important and influential of all these newspapers was easily the Barcelona paper *Los Deportes*. In 1899, it became the official organ of the FGE and was the central forum for the vibrant Barcelona athletic

³⁰ Rodríguez Ruiz, *Estudio de la gimnástica*, 68.

community. *Los Deportes* published some of the fundamental works of the period in its pages, including several manifestos on the FGE and the athletic movement's goals and Hans Gamper's legendary advertisement inviting people to an organizational meeting for a "foot-ball" team that was the origin of FC Barcelona. Nonetheless, these political and newspaper salvos were scattered and disorganized, and the only significantly lasting developments came in the 1890s. Rafael Rodríguez was quite correct to argue in his 1902 doctoral thesis, *Estudio de la gimnástica desde punto de vista de la higiénica pública*, that for most of the nineteenth century "Spain was a desert on this topic" and to limit his account of physical education within the Spain prior to 1902 to an appendix.

The two most fundamental groups in the early development of the sporting community in Spain were the ILE and the SGE/FGE. Based in Madrid, the ILE was founded in 1876 to provide an alternative to the state controlled universities and introduce progressive education to the country; the leaders of the ILE even took Eton, Harrow, and Oxbridge as their model directly even though those schools were not seen as "progressive" within Britain itself. Similarly, the SGE was founded in Madrid in 1889 and initially drew its inspiration from the French, German, and Swedish gymnastic societies. The influence of both groups, however, quickly spread out of Madrid and into Barcelona and Bilbao, where those two cities swiftly became the most vibrant sporting communities in the nation prior to the Spanish Civil War. Both organizations primarily consisted of the urban middle classes because of the equipment costs and free time required for participation, but strove to include both the elite and a few members of

the working class, and both wholeheartedly accepted the argument for physical improvement. The two organizations became training grounds for the leaders of the athletic communities and produced most of the first generation of athletics activists in Spain. For example, the ILE graduated many men who went on to play vital roles in the development of sport within Spain, yet the Institution itself never developed an interest in athletics beyond its pedagogical mission.

Role of the Institución Libre Enseñanza

The desire for physical education in schools provided the earliest impetus for the implantation of sport in Spain. As in most areas of educational reform, the much heralded Institución Libre de Enseñanza of Madrid spearheaded this desire. While the history of the ILE has received thorough scholarly attention over the years, it is still important to explain its development and ideology to understand its role in Spanish physical culture.³¹ The school's center and leader was Francisco Giner de los Ríos (1839-1915), a *catedrático* of the Philosophy of Law at the University of Madrid who would become the leader and most lionized figure of the Institución. The ILE was founded in 1876 as a 'free school' dedicated to intellectual freedom and its most enduring legacy was its primary school in Madrid that educated an entire generation of

³¹ For more thorough discussions of the ILE see Antonio Jimenez-Landi, *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y su ambiente* (Madrid: Taurus, 1973), Vincente Cacho Viu, *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Madrid: Rialp, 1962), Fernando Millán Sánchez, *La revolución laica: De la Institución Libre de Enseñanza a las escuelas de la República* (Valencia: Fernando Torres, 1983), and María Nieves Gómez García, *Educación y pedagogía en el pensamiento de Giner de los Ríos* (Seville: Publicaciones de la Universidad, 1983).

Spanish liberals. The ILE educators focused on primary education and founded a primary school two years later in 1878. After 1881, the Institución also focused on political and cultural reform and it succeeded in educating many of the most important thinkers and politicians of the early twentieth century, although it never attained great numbers.

The Institución's ideological leadership was provided by Giner de los Ríos, who studied under Julián Sanz del Río in the 1850s and joined Sanz del Río in the adoption of Krausism, a school of thought based on the works of the German philosopher Karl Friedrich Krause.³² Krausism granted God's place as creator of the universe, but argued that he did not subsequently intervene in the world. Mankind, therefore, needed to progress and develop towards God's image through the application of its own rational and moral nature. In Krausism, then, the development of moral law and right becomes the result of human agency, rational thought, and individual trial and error. Within a Spanish nation that had all but ignored the Reformation and Enlightenment, the adoption of such a theory proved to be an act of protest that set the ILE at odds with most of the establishment.

In comparison, the Spanish education system had remained (and would remain until at least the end of the Franco dictatorship) thoroughly dominated by Catholic schools and educational methods. Catholic dominance continued because the

³² For Krausism see Juan López-Morillas, *The Krausist Movement and Ideological Change in Spain, 1854-1874*, trans. Frances M. López-Morillas (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981) and Elías Díaz, *La filosofía social del krausismo español* (Madrid: EDICUSA, 1973).

Conservative party blocked most attempts at governmental reform and limited state funding of public education.³³ In 1857, the Moderado politician Claudio Moyano pushed through the Cortes a law to stimulate national education that was a compromise between the competing aims of church and state. The Ley Moyano remained the cornerstone of the Spanish education system until well into the twentieth century, but it was often loosely interpreted or openly ignored in schools across the nation. Most of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century attempts at educational reform consisted of fighting to enforce the 1857 law and produced bitter battles between liberals and conservatives. Both Catholic and state schools emphasized textbooks, used the catechistic technique of question and answer learning, and emphasized the rote memorization of answers. These approaches were enshrined not only as the teaching method, but also in the examinations required for governmental positions. Legal and judicial exams could only be successfully passed by focusing one's study on the questions that would be asked and this practice discriminated against anyone taught using a different educational method, such as that of the ILE.

Giner de los Ríos and leaders of the ILE fought to challenge this traditional, Catholic education system and to modernize or Europeanize education throughout the country. Among the ILE's goals was a commitment to physical education and its implantation within Spain's public and private school systems.³⁴ The school's leaders

³³ For the definitive work on the failure of Spanish education reform see Carolyn Boyd's *Historia Patria*.

³⁴ By far the best work on physical education in the ILE is Francisco López Serra, *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza: historia de la educación física de 1876 a 1898* (Madrid: Gymnos, 1998). López deals with

explicitly blended Giner's ideas with the desire for "active learning" that took education beyond the book. The introduction of athletics simply took their pedagogical approach beyond the classroom as well. Not surprisingly, the organ of the ILE, the *Boletín de la Institución Libre Enseñaza (BILE)*, is filled with articles addressing multiple ways of melding athletics and education. Between 1879 and 1906, the *BILE* was filled with articles on physical education with over 148 articles at least mentioning some aspect of physical fitness. The greatest concentration of articles came in the mid-1880s and 1890s, when the regeneration movement was beginning to coalesce and new methods of education streamed into the organization through increased contact with the rest of Europe.

The articles discussed a wide range of topics related to physical exercise and strove to explain why they were so important to the ILE's missions and the recovery of the nation in general. A variety of authors contributed pieces on physical education's role in general pedagogy and improving educational techniques. For example in articles on manual work, military exercises, and programs for normal and primary schools, Manuel Cossío argued that physical education was necessary to produce fully-rounded citizens. Other authors, such as Ricardo Rubio, focused specifically on physical education. Rubio contributed sixteen articles between 1882 and 1906 on athletics, the role of games in education, the past and present of physical education, the scholarly

both the theory and application of sport in the ILE in a detailed scholarly manner.

gymnasium, and a brief program on physical education.³⁵ His main theme through these articles was the advanced use of physical education in the countries of Europe and how physical education and an active approach to learning could produce more complete citizens. Other thinkers who had articles on physical education published in the *BILE* included Alfredo Calderón (1879), Angelo Mosso and Pedro Blanco Suárez (1894), Ilirio Guimerá (1889), and Adolfo Buylla (1890). Francisco Giner de los Ríos himself even contributed an article on “Los problemas de la educación física.”³⁶ Some writers addressed anatomical topics, such as the French doctor, F. Lagrange, who wrote an article in 1895 on the “Función del cerebro en el ejercicio.” Lagrange argued that both the brain and the muscles reacted similarly when used and could thus be trained to function on a higher level. The inclusion of articles by Angelo Mosso also represented this “scientific” approach because he was an internationally known Italian pharmacologist and physiologist.³⁷ His expertise was studies of fatigue and the effects of altitude on physical performance. Adolfo Buylla in his 1885 article, “La educación física y moral en las universidades” that spanned fifteen pages and three issues of the *BILE*, picked up the themes of muscular Christianity and portrayed athletics as a school of morals and team play.³⁸

³⁵ Manuel Cossío and Ricardo Rubio’s numerous articles on physical education are listed under their names in the bibliography.

³⁶ Francisco Giner de los Ríos, “Los problemas de la educación física,” *BILE* 12 (1888): 157-58.

³⁷ John, Hoberman, *Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport* (New York: MacMillan, 1992).

³⁸ F. Lagrange, “Función del cerebro en el ejercicio,” *BILE* 19 (1895): 68-73, 107-110, 148-152, 171-177, 199-207 and Adolfo Buylla, “La educación física y moral en las Universidades,” *BILE* 9 (1885): 202-07, 213-216, 227-231.

Another popular topic was the establishment of “colonias escolares,” essentially summer camps, and excursions from the classroom. These were put into action sporadically in the end of the nineteenth century. For example, fieldwork in the countryside became popular among naturalists of the Cátedras de Historia Natural at the Facultad de Ciencias de Barcelona and a few courses on physical education were offered at the University of Oviedo as early as the 1890s.³⁹ Similar excursionist trips were held in Murcia by a Sr. Medel and significant interest in excursions developed in the ILE. Articles in the *BILE* focused on both the theory of such ventures and reports from actual excursions that were organized. The central article addressing the theory of these summer camps was Manuel Cossío’s “Las colonias escolares de vacaciones” which explained the general goals and upcoming plans for such programs over the 1880s.⁴⁰ Cossío reported back the next year on how the programs turned out in 1888 and detailed the lessons his students had learned during the trip to the countryside. Several years later reported Berta Wilhelm de Dávila reported on a similar program in Granada.⁴¹ The largest series of excursions came between 1894 and 1900 when the Corporación de Antiguos Alumnos organized four excursionist programs at Miraflores de la Sierra. They reported back on the success of these programs annually as the program developed and refined that idea of using the larger world as a classroom.⁴² The

³⁹ Rodríguez Ruiz, *Estudio de la gimnástica*, 79-81.

⁴⁰ Manuel Cossío, “La colonias escolares de vacaciones,” *BILE* 12 (1888): 205-210, 217-19.

⁴¹ Manuel Cossío, “La colonias escolares en 1888,” *BILE* 13 (1889): 225-28, 241-44; Berta Wilhelm de Dávila, “La primera colonia de vacaciones en Granada,” *BILE* 15 (1891): 177-84.

⁴² Corporación de Antiguos Alumnos, “Cuenta de ingresos y gastos de la cantidades invertidas en la colonia escolar de vacaciones organizadas por la Corporación en el verano de 1894, en Miraflores de la

ILE's interest in excursions was part of its larger interest in active education.⁴³ Besides organizing excursions, they equipped their classrooms with maps, laboratories, and animals for dissection and took their students on trips to museums, monuments, and factories to make their lessons more real and tangible. The use of scholarly excursions was, therefore, fundamental to the ILE's ideology and fit it smoothly with the inclusion of athletics.

The appropriate role for girls in physical education also received attention in the *BILE* as was only appropriate because the ILE itself was coed and included young girls in the games its students played at school. Some authors dealt with the role of women in education in general, such as Concepción Arenal who wrote "La educación de la mujer" and Berta Wilhelm de Dávila who discussed a woman's capability for all the professions. These writers challenged the social mores that dictated certain roles to women and argued that young girls needed the same opportunity for play as boys so that their strength, mobility, and respiratory systems were strong and made them capable contributors to society.⁴⁴ A few authors even focused specifically on physical education for women as well. The most prominent of these were Angelo Mosso, Joaquin Sama, and Aniceto Sela, who all wrote articles on the physical education of

Sierra," *BILE* 19 (1895): 254-56; Corporación de Antiguos Alumnos, "La segunda colonia escolar," *BILE* 21 (1897): 284-85; Corporación de Antiguos Alumnos, "La tercera colonia escolar," *BILE* 22 (1898): 381-84; Corporación de Antiguos Alumnos, "Excursiones a pie desde Madrid," *BILE* 23 (1899): 320, 350-52; Corporación de Antiguos Alumnos, "La quinta colonia de vacaciones," *BILE* 24 (1900): 382-84.

⁴³ Boyd, *Historia Patria*, 32-33.

⁴⁴ Concepción Arenal, "La educación de la mujer," *BILE* 16 (1892): 305-13; Berta Wilhelm de Dávila, "Aptitud de la mujer para todos las profesiones," *BILE* 17 (1893): 97-102, 113-118, 129-133.

women in the late 1880s and early 1890s.⁴⁵ All three suggested that physically fit women could play larger roles in the nation as both stronger mothers and more capable workers themselves.

A wide array of the articles in the *BILE* discussed the foreign implantations of and conferences on sport. These articles provide important clues suggesting where the members of the ILE and in the entire Spanish sports movement got the inspiration and models for its activities. Many authors of *BILE* articles reported on international conferences on education with references to the role of physical education. The *BILE* included reports from the International Conference on Education held in Brussels in 1890 and a psychology conference held in Munich in 1896, to name only a pair of examples. Others reported on conferences that dealt directly with hygiene and physical fitness such as Aniceto Sela's 1887 report on discussions about scholarly hygiene in the Academia de Paris and a report on the conference on physical education held in London in 1892.⁴⁶ These reports familiarized the Spanish with the fear of physical degeneration related to the horrible living conditions in cities such as London and Paris. They also introduced programs like excursionism that the European hygienic movements were using to improve physical capability among its citizens and that could be copied in Spain.

Other authors emphasized their foreign connection and the leadership the ILE

⁴⁵ Angelo Mosso, "La educación física de la mujer," *BILE* 16 (1892): 129-33; Joaquín Sama, "La educación física en la mujer," *BILE* 16 (1892): 371-70; Aniceto Sela, "La educación física de la mujer," *BILE* 12 (1888): 281-84, 297-99, 302-05.

⁴⁶ Aniceto Sela, "La higiene escolar en la Academia de París," *BILE* 11 (1887): 292-94.

saw in Britain and France. The best example of this is Ricardo Rubio, who produced some of the most important articles. His earliest *BILE* article dated to 1882 and reports on the third pedagogical conference held in Paris in that year. His subsequent articles included comments on an 1888 pedagogical conference in Paris and discussion of the entire French Pedagogical movement in 1889. Rubio used the articles to portray how much more advanced the French system was than its equivalent in Spain. He noted, for example, that the conferences were partially funded by the French state to spur the improvement of physical education within the country. Rubio also provided detailed explanations of the introduction of football and rounders into the ILE that reveal exactly how the school was embracing “active education” from England. His arguments made clear how important the leadership of French and English athletics and pedagogy were in developing the ILE’s interest in physical regeneration.

Finally, many writers contributed individual articles on various blends of athletics and education in other countries. Some of these were by Spanish educators who gathered information during their trips abroad while other articles were reprints of essays published in other countries, usually France, Great Britain, Germany, or the United States. These articles kept the Spaniards up to date and also highlighted the modernity and international importance of their cause. There are articles on physical education in the military schools of Austria-Hungary, state education in Japan, physical education in Portugal, the “spirit of national education” in Norway, and the co-ed

American universities and the role of athletics within them.⁴⁷ One anonymous author even wrote a biographical article on Francisco Amorós, the founder of French gymnastics, who explained Amorós's struggles to introduce the practice into France and gain mainstream acceptance.⁴⁸ He portrayed Amorós as a role model for similar pioneers to emulate and bring similar improvements to Spain. The epitome of these historians of the international implementation of education was Juan Uña y Sarthou.⁴⁹ In the decade between 1894 and 1904, Uña y Sarthou wrote articles on an athletics conference in Paris, the education congress at the 1893 Chicago exposition, on Toynbee Hall in England, and two separate articles on secondary education in England. All of these articles emphasized the importance that foreign educational systems placed on athletics as both a balance to book learning and a school of morals. This range of English, American, French, and other foreign influences makes clear that British public schools and the new French Olympic movement had strong influences on the implantation and ideology of athletics within the ILE.

The members of the ILE did more than just write about the athletics; they participated in them and encouraged their students to join in as well. As early as 1877,

⁴⁷ Fr. Kemeny, "La educación física en las escuelas militares de Austria-Hungría," *BILE* 15 (1882): 38-41; R.E. Lewis, "La educación del estado en el Japón," *BILE* 26 (1902): 1-8; Antonio Vianna, "La educación física en Portugal," *BILE* 11 (1887): 145-48; X, "Espíritu de la educación nacional en Noruega," *BILE* 19 (1895): 229-32.

⁴⁸ X, "Don Francisco Amorós, fundador de la gimnasia francesa," *BILE* 12 (1888): 196-200, 210-13.

⁴⁹ Juan Uña y Sarthou, "El congreso atlético de París," *BILE* 18 (1894): 250-51; Juan Uña y Sarthou, "Los congresos de educación en la exposición de Chicago de 1893," *BILE* 18 (1894): 300-02; Juan Uña y Sarthou, "Desde el Toynbee Hall," *BILE* 27 (1903): 1-5, 33-40; Juan Uña y Sarthou, "Algunos tipos de escuelas de segunda educación en Inglaterra," *BILE* 28 (1904): 1-4; Juan Uña y Sarthou, "Educación inglesa," *BILE* 28 (1904): 129-38, 169-81.

games of running and jumping were played by students in the streets around the school. Later, more organized games for the younger children like “liebres y lebreles” which was essentially cops and robbers, and paper chase became popular among the students. Gradually, these simple, youthful games were transformed after 1882 through the influence of a man named Stewart Henbest Capper.⁵⁰ Capper held a degree in classics from the University of Edinburgh and he later became a well-respected architect and professor who helped found schools of architecture at McGill University in Quebec and Victoria University in Manchester. Just after graduating from college at the age of twenty two, he was sent to Madrid from 1881 to 1884 to serve as personal secretary to the distinguished British diplomat, Sir Robert Morier, and also tutor to his son.⁵¹ Capper was a good product of the British public school system and muscular Christianity. He attended the Royal High School and the University of Edinburgh, and later in life he even taught a course on “hygienic” architecture. Capper happily taught the rules of football, cricket, and other British games at the school, which already had professors educated in England who were familiar with these games. Working together, Manuel Cossío and Capper introduced the game of rounders (basically baseball) that Ricardo Rubio claimed in 1893 was the most popular among the students of the school.⁵² Rubio explained that after a tour of England in 1889, another professor at the ILE formally introduced football to the school and the two sports swiftly came to

⁵⁰ There is some conflict about the actual name of this Englishman because while some Spanish sources his last name is Capper in others he is referred to as Cooper. However, it was actually Stewart Henbest Capper as confirmed by English sources.

⁵¹ López Serra, *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*, 180.

⁵² Ricardo Rubio, “Los juegos corporales en la educación,” *BILE* 20 (1893): 147.

dominate athletic activity there-- football in the fall and winter and rounders in the spring. Popular along with these two English sports was Basque pelota, which represented a more 'Spanish' option and a different set of athletic skills.

As more students became interested in playing these games, the administrators at the ILE took notice and began scheduling times during the week for them to dedicate to them, rather than the students just gathering informally between their morning and afternoon classes. According to the "Prospecto para el 1884-1885," all of Thursday afternoons were left open for these games and the next year's prospectus allotted either Wednesday or Thursday afternoon as well as Sunday morning for such activities.⁵³ Wednesday afternoons and Sunday mornings would become the typical times for athletic competition at the school over the following decades. The locations for these games started out as the streets around the school, such as calle Infantes, but as the games became more common and accepted at the ILE, larger areas were made available around the city where there was free space such as around the early Retiro park. For example, according to ex-student José Giner Pantoja the Sunday games came to be played at the Puente de Fernando.⁵⁴ Later professor José Ontañón led students to two other locations where he refereed football matches for them.⁵⁵ On Wednesdays, Ontañón took students to Dehesa de la Villa, while on Sundays they went north to the

⁵³ Institución Libre de Enseñanza, "Prospecto para el 1884-85," *BILE* 8 (1884): 190; Institución Libre de Enseñanza, "Prospecto para el 1885-86," *BILE* 9 (1885): 286.

⁵⁴ José Giner Pantoja, "La educación estética en la Institución," *En el Centenario de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1977), 55.

⁵⁵ José Ontañón was a fairly active member of the ILE both as referee for the football games and also as a participant in summer programs, which he wrote an article on in 1882.

fields of Chamartín that later became the first home of Real Madrid F.C..⁵⁶

As a result, the school produced not only some of the most important academics of the age, but also some of the most important promoters and participants in early twentieth-century Spanish sport. Many of those students and educators moved directly into the SGE in the 1890s and 1910s and organized the conferences that will be discussed in more detail in the next section. These ex-students were also the kernels of the specific sport (bicycling and football) societies that grew up as well. The most famous and important example of a new club being founded by ex-students was the football society called “Foot-ball Sky” that developed informally in the 1890s. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Foot-ball Sky was a loose group that effectively organized pick-up football games in northern Madrid. The club primarily included ex-ILE students and later split into two groups because of organizational differences. One of those groups called itself “Madrid Football Club” and gradually developed into Real Madrid FC, currently the richest and, arguably, most successful football club in the world.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Manuel Varela Uña, “La última etapa de la Institución vista por uno de sus alumnos,” *En el Centenario de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Madrid: Tecnos, 1977), 215.

⁵⁷ Interestingly, Real Madrid’s origin seems to have been something of a minor state secret during Franco’s rule, or at the very least something that it was not wise to say out loud. Almost all sources from that period attribute the club’s foundation to “a group of students from a local *colegio*” and studiously avoid saying anything more specific than that. In the 1950s and early 1960s, Spain was almost completely isolated diplomatically from the rest of the world. During that time Real Madrid FC won six European championships and Franco publicly embraced and hailed them as the Spanish ‘diplomats to the world.’ Presumably it was more that a little embarrassing to Franco that this team he promoted and openly backed as the glorification of all things Castilian and centralizing had been founded by students from the hated ILE.

Foundation and Development of the RFGE

Despite the importance of the ILE as a seat for the first serious discussion of physical education in Spain, the practical center for the implementation of sport and improved physical education in fin de siècle Spain was the Federación Gimnástica Española. The FGE developed out of the Sociedad Gimnástica Española (SGE) that was founded in Madrid in 1887 and expanded outward in every direction and incorporated gymnastic clubs in other regions until a national federation was established in 1898. By 1900, the FGE had local branches in every significant urban area in the nation and was pressing into small towns as well. The society's leaders were prominent members of the athletic community well into the 1920s and many became sports journalists known throughout the nation, such as Narciso Másferrer. As an organization, the FGE was openly evangelistic and energetic in advancing its cause, which it saw as the ideal method of regenerating the nation.

The SGE itself organized and ran several gyms and fields in Madrid from the beginning, supported facilities throughout the nation, and expanded along with the athletic movement. Four original members made up the society's core: president Narciso Másferrer Sala, secretary Emilio Coll, treasurer Eduardo Charles, and founding member Emilio Fernández Monjardín.⁵⁸ When they founded the SGE in 1887, all four

⁵⁸ Pompeyo Sevilla Gómez, *Medio siglo de la Real Sociedad Gimnástica Española (1887-1937)* (Madrid: Silverio Aguirre, 1951), 8-16. This book provides a solid account of the RSGE's early development with curious implications and potential biases. The author, Sevilla Gómez, was an ex-president and member

were young men in their twenties who worked together in the offices of the French petrol company, Deustch de la Meurthe (although the company itself never supported their activities). Of these men, only the Frenchman, Eduardo Charles, faded from the organization, because he switched jobs to the Compañía Internacional de Coches-Camas and eventually left Spain entirely in 1917. Másferrer, on the other hand, proved to be one of the strongest voices in the development of Spanish athletics until his death in 1941. After some time in Madrid, the vitality of Barcelona's athletic development led him to return there by 1899. Over the course of his career he helped found and organize the sports newspapers *Los Deportes*, *Vida Deportiva*, *Mundo Deportivo* and *Vida Moderna* and also served as an occasional contributor of *El Liberal* and *La Vanguardia*.⁵⁹ Organizationally, he started numerous clubs and societies. After the SGE in Madrid, he helped organize Catalana de Atletismo, Asociación Catalana de Gimnástica, and the Club de Natación in Barcelona as well as the Federación Gimnástica Española that united all the cells of the SGE. In the 1910s, Másferrer also helped establish the Sindicato de Periodistas Deportivas (a sports reporter union) once athletics had developed into an industry of itself.

The founding secretary, Emilio Coll, also became an important leader in the athletic movement, although he remained in Madrid for the majority of his career after his youth in Catalonia. Born on 11 February 1868 into a comfortably secure family

of merit of the society and the book was part of a series titled "Paginas Deportivas." Its publication in 1951 was likely related to a collection of histories published in the early years under Franco that cast the development of sports in a form acceptable to the government and to some extent co-opted them.

⁵⁹ "El Comité Ejecutivo," *Los Deportes* (Barcelona) 3, no. 42, 21 October 1900, 647-8 and Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 14.

with connections in the chemical industry, Coll brought significant financial resources to his interest in sport. Like Másferrer, he collaborated in the important early paper *Los Deportes*, but he participated in two other Barcelona newspapers as well, *Mundo Deportivo* and *Stadium*. While back in Madrid, he contributed to *España Sportiva*, *Boletín de la Unión Velocipédica Español* and *El País*. His interests led him primarily to cycling and in 1908 he was named president of the Comité de la Unión Velocipédica and awarded the silver medal at the Centenario de la Independencia in Zaragoza.

Finally, the contributions of Emilio Fernández Monjardín were cut short by his early death on September 18, 1898 at the age of 28.⁶⁰ Monjardín helped found *El Gimnasta*, served in a variety of positions for the SGE over the 1890s, and also participated in the development of the Asociación Catalana de Gimnástica and the review *Los Deportes*. His actions and role likely would have been larger, but illness curtailed his activities, such as the attempted foundation of a review called *El Campeón*. He remained, nonetheless, a close associate and friend of Másferrer who eulogized his participation in the movement in the pages of *Los Deportes*.

The initial idea of founding a society came from Emilio Coll, who had learned of the French gymnastic society when reading French magazines the company imported. The more he learned, the more Coll wanted to establish a similar society within Spain. The four officemates soon held their first meeting located at the Círculo de la Unión Mercantil in Madrid with their families and a little over two dozen

⁶⁰ Narciso Másferrer y Sala, "Emilio Fernández Monjardín," *Los Deportes* (Barcelona) 2, no. 23, 1 October 1898, 406-8.

supporters in attendance. Also attending the gathering were the gymnasium owners Mariano Marcos Ordax and Marcelo Sanz, both of whom became forces within the sports community in their own right. Ordax had run a small gymnastic school in Madrid out of his gymnasium since the closure of the Escuela Central de Gimnástica in 1892 and continued to be instrumental for two decades, providing the SGE's best facilities until 1922.⁶¹

Although less important within the SGE itself, Marcelo Sanz also made extremely important contributions to the movement in general. For decades he ran a “hygienic” gymnasium and weapons practice room that even offered showers and massages at number 10 calle del Prado. Not coincidentally, Sanz's gym was just down the street from the Ateneo de Madrid, an institution founded in 1820 and befriended in 1875 by the Conservative leader Cánovas de Castilo. The Ateneo provided a place where intellectuals of all sorts met and freely voiced their opinions. Almost every important intellectual of the period was a member. The location of Sanz's gymnasium suggests that many of these intellectual reformers patronized his establishment and his ideas, however informally. Sanz also wrote numerous books supporting the positive benefits of athletics and breaking down the values of specific sports. One of the earliest of these was *Manual de gimnástica higiénica y juegos escolares* published before 1899 and the most important of was *Ensayo de una higiene deportiva ó los deportes ante la higiene* published in 1913 by *La Correspondencia Militar*. In this later work, he

⁶¹ Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 18.

analyzed the values of mountain climbing, skiing, sledding, foot racing, cycling, cricket, fencing, track and field sports, and, of course, football. Sanz's influence on athletics remained until well into the 1910s. He represented one of the classic early entrepreneur/enthusiasts whose early gymnasiums both supported athletics and survived financially on the income their growth brought in, representing the earliest front of sports as a business. Sanz was also one of the most vocal supporters of the utility of military gymnastics and provided a more conservative voice in the sporting world than other leaders who were connected to the Liberal political party.

Even at this early meeting of the SGE, both the leadership role of Britain in athletics and the goal of creating a Spanish institution can be seen as concerns of the founders. Másferrer wanted to name the group "Club de Gimnastas", but Coll objected to using the English word "club" and preferred the neutral phrase "sociedad gimnástica." Coll even pushed for the inclusion of the nation in the title, leading to the inclusion of "española." The question of how much use to make of English words would be a problematic one for the entire Spanish athletic movement (and sports movements around the world as well) and suggests how delicate a balance there was between the foreign nature of contemporary athletics and the nationalist goals of the movement. The initial years of the society were long and hard with limited resources, but gradually the SGE expanded over the 1890s and into the first years of the 1900s.

In 1888, the society produced the first sports newspaper in Spain under the title *El Gymnasta* that launched Másferrer and Coll upon careers as the first Spanish

sportswriters.⁶² The new organization started its active life using Señor Ordaz's gymnasium at 10 calle del Prado and established the substantial monthly fee of 2.40 pesetas for membership.⁶³ In 1893, new sections were added to the club that focused on swimming and rowing. By 1898, the FGE had managed to connect the four earliest gymnastic organizations in the nation; Club Gimnástico de Tarragona, Sociedad 'El Gimnasio' de Vigo, Sociedad Gimnástico Española (Madrid) and Asociación Catalana de Gimnástico (Barcelona).⁶⁴ The SGE had also established executive committees to run branches in Tarragona, Lérida, Alicante, Huelva, Salamanca, Sevilla, Baleares, Burgos, Gerona, Ávila, Logroño, Murcia, Albacete, Cádiz, Alicante, and Badajoz.⁶⁵ This list provides an example of the FGE's expansive geographic development and the positive reception it received over the course of the 1890s that laid the foundation for a national movement.

It was in 1898 that the SGE took the next step and organized a national federation, establishing the Federación Gimnástica Española. The leaders of the SGE announced the goal of uniting the nation's athletic societies in the March 1, 1898 issue of the Barcelona newspaper *Los Deportes*-- and received a wildly positive response from gymnastic societies across the country.⁶⁶ They then organized a meeting on June 7 in the Madrid society's home office that brought together representatives of the

⁶² Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 41.

⁶³ Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 11.

⁶⁴ *Los Deportes* 1, no. 3, 1 December 1897, 46

⁶⁵ Executive committees are listed for these cities in *Los Deportes* vol. 1, 466, 481 and vol. 2, 4, 20, 70, 384.

⁶⁶ Rodríguez Ruiz, *Estudio de la gimnástica*, 82.

Asociación Catalana de Gimnástica de Barcelona, Club Gimnástico de Cartagena, Club Gimnástica de Tarragona, Sociedad Gimnástica de Gerona, Sociedad Gimnástica de Orense, and of course the hosting Sociedad Gimnástica de Madrid itself to found the national organization. Included among the representatives at this historic gathering were Fernandez Monjardín, Narciso Másferrer, Marcelo Sanz, Mariano Ordax and all of the most important early proponents of Spanish athletics. The committee sought to establish a collective focus for all athletic societies throughout the nation, constituting an executive committee for the FGE, extending the movement into the provinces, and preparing for a national assembly in 1899.

An initial national committee was soon established consisting of José Canalejas Méndez as president, Alejandro San Martín and Mariano Ordax as vice-presidents, Marcelo Sanz as secretary, and Emilio Faura as vice-secretary. The first two of these deputies represented a coup for the organization and both demonstrated the increasing importance of the movement, although both positions were largely honorary. José Canalejas was already a well-known figure at this point. He was a prominent member of the Liberal party who served as the minister of Hacienda, Gracia y Justicia, and Fomento and later became prime minister in 1910. He was a *socio de número* in the original SGE of Madrid and his acceptance of the position of President when the society created the federation, provided them with a much higher profile within Spanish society that linked the SGE directly to the Liberal party.⁶⁷ Canalejas helped establish official

⁶⁷ “El Comité Ejecutivo,” *Los Deportes* 4, no. 41, 14 October 1898, 645-6.

professorships of Gymnastics throughout the nation and served as president for two years until his presidency was officially made honorary at the Second Assembly in Barcelona in 1900.

The participation of Dr. Alejandro San Martín provided a similar profile and credibility to the new organization, but in the fields of science and medicine rather than politics. San Martín played a key role in organizing the First Assembly in 1899 that was amplified by his position as doctor and professor on the Facultad de Medicina de Madrid, editor of two scientific journals, and a leader of the medical community who brought in friends from Madrid's medical and political communities. He had also helped organize an Escuela Central de Gimnástica and recognized through it the importance of educating the children of the nation. San Martín would be one of the first of many medical people who developed an interest in physical hygiene within the nation and supported the FGE. Physical hygiene would become an important and respected field of science by the 1920s and San Martín was the first in the long line of doctors who studied the topic. Finally, he was also an active member of the Spanish Liberal party and even served as the Minister of Public Instruction in 1906. San Martín played a key role in bringing legitimacy and Liberal party support to the young movement.

The step of establishing the national FGE took the organization to an entirely new level and spurred further development and interest. The timing of the move was perfect as the events of 1898 dramatized the Spanish military's weakness. National

fervor rode high over the spring of 1898, but in the summer when the Spanish Pacific and Atlantic squadrons were both wiped out by American fleets, the question “What was wrong with Spain?” flashed through the peninsula like a lightning bolt. It was during this summer that the founders launched the FGE and directly connected the athletic movement to regeneration. This goal was explicitly stated in the *Los Deportes* on October 15 1898, several months after the defeat of the Spanish fleet at Santiago de Cuba. In an article titled “La regeneración de la Patria” one journalist wrote:

Persona por tantos conceptos ilustre como D. José Echegaray ha dicho que “*la fórmula* (para la regeneración de la patria) es *sencilla, es casi matemática, y por nuestra gloria y honor, de posible cumplimiento*. QUE CADA UNO SE REGENERE Á SÍ MISMO: *se haga mejor en virtud y ENERGÍA: en voluntad y en acción, y TODO LA NACIÓN QUEDARÁ REGENERADA...*”

...esas palabras tan admirablemente dicha sintetizan todo un programa: el programa de la *Federación Gimnástica Española*, y como el *movimiento se prueba andando*, desde hace cuatro meses, llevamos emprendida esa campaña, unidos todos los que de buena fe anhelamos al regeneración de la patria, empezando por regenerarnos á nosotros mismos, y dispuestos hoy más que nunca, á preservar en el logro de nuestros legítimas aspiraciones, y á no cejar en nuestros propósitos hasta conseguir el ideal supremo porque todo el mundo suspira después de sufridos tantos y tan crueles y enormes desastres.

Bendita, mil veces bendita la hora en que se inició en LOS DEPORTES la campaña que, secundada en principio por todos nuestros amigos, puede llegar á ser y será, base de la salvación de la patria.⁶⁸

In this article, the writer called upon the goals of *regeneracionismo* as described by José Echegaray such as restoring the “glory and honor” of the nation. Words like “virtue” and “action” are italicized and capitalization brought even more urgency to the word “energy” and the phrase “all the nation will remain regenerated,” creating an oratorical

⁶⁸ “La regeneración de la Patria,” *Los Deportes* 2, no. 24, 15 October 1898, 414. All italics and capitals are faithful to the original text.

climax. The author then used these words, emphases, and active tone to link regeneration directly to athletics in general and the FGE and *Los Deportes* in particular. He asserted that the new FGE had worked hard for its four month existence to improve the nation. Finally, in the last sentence the author looked to the future and claimed that the FGE planned “to be and will be the salvation of the country.” Quotes such as these were far from unusual in the *Los Deportes* issues of the period and establish that its conscious adoption of *regeneracionismo* was designed to gain importance and momentum for the movement.

After the establishment of a national federation in 1898, one of its first acts was to plan a national conference for 1899 with representatives from all the executive committees across the country. Officially the “Secunda Asamblea y Primero Fiestas Federales,” the September 1899 event held in Barcelona was the true watershed for the FGE. This conference brought newfound respect and size to the organization both through the vibrant support of its host city and the addition of a wide range of athletic competitions that drew curious observers out to watch and sparked interest in the new activities. Football matches took place at the early Velódromo de la Bonanova adjoining the hotel of the same name. Foot and bicycle races were held in the streets outside the Ayuntamiento and at different locations around the city with crowds of unknown numbers coming to witness the odd spectacle and learn about what they were doing. There was also a small conference attached to the festival, with papers presented on a variety of topics related to physical education, the medical importance of racial

hygiene, and the ways that athletics could be introduced within the nation. The festival ended with a final banquet held in the Salón de Ciento de la Casas Consistoriales, a prestigious conference hall in Barcelona maintained by the city government, on September 24, 1899.⁶⁹ Dr. Rafael Rodríguez Méndez (the current president of the FGE) closed the ceremonies with a speech hailing the recognition gained and general success of the event. On his right sat General López Diez, representative of the Captain General of Catalonia and an example of the military's interest in physical education, and on his left was a representative of the mayor of Barcelona. These three dignitaries were surrounded at the head table by most of the executive committee of the FGE including Narciso Másferrer, Enrique Fernández del Castillo, David Ferrer, Eduardo Tolosa, Pedro Cercós, and Dr. Joaquín Cebeira.

Rodríguez Méndez was a medical expert on physical hygiene and had been working to introduce it for decades from his seat as a professor at the University of Barcelona and later as a Radical Republican member of the Cortes.⁷⁰ He spoke on many different aspects of the festival and singled out the support the military provided the endeavor and dedicated:

...frases de elogio y respeto al elemento militar que ha dado una de las notas más simpáticas de los festejos, demostrando que aun palpita en el soldado español aquella condición de hidalguía y de la caballeridad que fue siempre el distintivo de nuestro ejército; hace la apología del Certamen del Tiro y se congratula del éxito, ofreciéndoselo en justo homenaje de justicia a los

⁶⁹ L. Miguel Farga, "Asamblea y fiestas federales," *Los Deportes* 3, no. 41, 14 October 1900, 643.

⁷⁰ An excellent introduction to the nineteenth century hygienic movement within the medical community is Rafael Alcaide González, "La introducción y el desarrollo del higienismo en España durante el siglo XII: precursores, continuadores y marco legal de un proyecto científico y social," *Scripta Nova: Revista electrónica de geografía y ciencias sociales* (Universidad de Barcelona) no. 50, 15 October 1999.

elementos militar y civil que simbolizan las aspiraciones del pueblo y la majestad de la glorias patrias.⁷¹

Also receiving praise were the members of the British colony in Barcelona who had helped organize and play the football matches, the gymnastic teachers of Barcelona for their own organizational efforts, and the firemen of the city for their support as well. Rodríguez Méndez asserted that these groups had all helped the FGE affirm that “la gimnasia no es un espectáculo de circo, sino un supremo recurso para la defensa.”⁷² In so doing he reaffirmed the connection between athletics and the military as one of the leading proponents of physical education that General López Diez’s position of honor at the banquet already suggested. After this event the activities of the FGE and the athletic movement it led were taken more seriously and had a greater mass appeal than before. Nonetheless, it was not until the next political crisis and the true birth of mass consumer sport in the 1920s that the Federation’s influence became numerically significant throughout the nation.

Barcelona and the Cultural Implications of the Growing Sports

Much of the reason the first national festival of the FGE was so successful was its location in Barcelona. By 1900, the condal city and Catalonia in general were home to the first significant athletic community in the country. Barcelona’s early athletic world served as a model within the nation and provides an interesting example of how

⁷¹ Farga, *Los Deportes*, 643.

⁷² Farga, *Los Deportes*, 644.

the emergent industrial entrepreneurs and professional bourgeoisie of the city created an identity through athletics. As the Barcelonan economy expanded, it produced more company owners, more office workers and managers, more lawyers, and more university graduates who needed to establish their social prestige in the city.⁷³ These new groups developed different sub-sections. One group were large-scale, conservative, Catholic industrialists, who strove to blend into elite society, such as Eusebio Güell who became a count. A second group consisted mostly of lower-level clerks and small businessmen who were still generally conservative and Catholic, but often less severe in their beliefs and willing to accept consider more radical ideas. Individuals from both groups dove into the new athletic culture, which featured a variety of clubs that specialized in an impressive range of sports for the period. Cycling drew the most attention, but water sports, early automobiles, and a little known English sport awkwardly called in Spanish “foot-ball,” were all starting to produce clubs within the city, including the seeds of FC Barcelona and Real Club Deportivo Español.⁷⁴ Beyond these core sports, fin-de-siècle Barcelona became home to a Real Club de Regatas that combined various forms of sailing and played an important role in hosting the 1899 FGE Festival. By 1901, athletic enthusiasts with connections to the foreign community within the city had even set up the city’s first tennis club.

Gymnastics in the city was promoted by the aforementioned Asociación

⁷³ Gary McDonogh, *Good Families of Barcelona: A Social History of Power in the Industrial Era* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

⁷⁴ Narciso Másferrer y Sala, “Los deportes en España,” *Los Deportes* 1, no. 2, 14 November 1897, 18.

Catalana de Gimnástica (ACG) that had been established to organize activities such as proper stretching, boxing, running, and the use of gymnastic apparatuses like the rings, parallel bars, and floor exercises. The ACG presided over a collection of gymnasiums across Barcelona and in the neighboring towns of Catalonia, with the most prominent being the Gimnasio Solé located at number 5 Monjuic del Carmen.⁷⁵ In fact, the Gimnasio Solé was essentially the center of the entire Barcelonan athletic movement. As well as being one of the largest facilities in the city, it provided offices for the Asociación Catalana de Gimnástica and the newspaper *Los Deportes*, the city's two most important athletic organizations. The Gimnasio Solé also allowed a collection of fledgling clubs to use it as a location for meetings and as an official address, including most of the early football clubs. The importance of gymnastics in the early Barcelonan athletic community also reveals the conservative nature of most of the Catalan middle classes. While sport drew its ideological antecedents from the more liberal British tradition, gymnastics carried a more conservative and continental connotation because of the conservative role they played in Germany. This was ideal for Barcelona's businessmen and industrialists, whose involvement in trade led them to appreciate modern "European" activities, but whose essential conservatism led them initially to prefer the German approach, as well as the more continental sport of cycling.

The dominant early sport throughout Catalonia was cycling, which, along with gymnastics, drove the early Barcelonan athletic movement. By 1898, the early Club

⁷⁵ *Los Deportes* 4, no. 2, 14 January 1900, 17-18.

Velocipédico de Barcelona had not only been established, but was about to organize the Unión Velocipédico Catalana to coordinate competitions among various cycling clubs in the region and to provide an autonomous governing body. The numbers of these organizations were small, but already significant. In April 1898, the Club Velocipédico had two hundred and seven members in good standing on its books, with seventy-five leaving or being thrown out of the club for failing to paying their dues.⁷⁶ That number is quite substantial considering the limited size of Barcelona's professional middle class and the fact that the Club Velocipédico was only one of several clubs.

Outside of Barcelona, Veloz Sport Balear in the Balearics led the tide of club foundations in September 1896. By 1900, Reus, Manresa, Mallorca, and Gerona all had organizations with the title Club Velocipédico and other cycling organizations such as the Club Velocipédico Sabadellés and the Sociedad Velocipédica Zaragozana had spread across northeast Spain.⁷⁷ One edition alone of *Los Deportes* in 1898 mentioned that races were held in Gerona as part of the annual festival of Saint Narciso, in Tarragona of 100 and 50 meters, over longer distances between both Tarragona and Barcelona and the town of Vilafranca del Panadés under the direction of the UVE, and even a 36 kilometer trip from Barcelona to La Garriga.⁷⁸

The growing number of athletic societies in Barcelona also produced a profusion of stores and restaurants that catered to the budding athletes and aggressively marketed

⁷⁶ *Los Deportes* 2, no. 11, 1 April 1898, 196.

⁷⁷ These societies are all mentioned over the course of 1900 in *Los Deportes*.

⁷⁸ *Los Deportes* 2, no. 23, 1 October 1898, 408.

sports equipment to the public. These different businesses took out advertisements in newspapers like *Los Deportes* and its pre-March 1899 competitor, *Barcelona Sport*, hawking athletic apparel and equipment of all kinds at prices that only the middle classes could afford. A store named Vidal (Arco del Teatro 19) specialized in sports clothes of the latest styles and competed with the Camisería Kneipp de J. Santiveri (Calle de Call 20), which offered new kits for the *socios* of the different football clubs.⁷⁹ Advertisements were for bicycles, bicycle supplies, and bicycle repair shops that were the most typical athletic goods sold in the city. La Mecánica de José Casanovas (calle de Regomir 13 and 15) sold bicycles for thirty duros and sold, exchanged, and rented them to the public. These prices were quite expensive and restricted participation to the bourgeoisie surrounding the city's successful businessmen or higher. Two other shops, A. Samtroma (calle de Balmes 64) and Ymbert (calle de Balmes 9) focused their advertisements on repairing bicycles and a third, R. Quadreny (calle de Cortes 92), specialized in tires and even offered to detail bicycles. This small survey of advertisements suggests that a significant commercial market for athletic endeavors had already developed in Barcelona by 1900 as a commercial companion to the propagation of sports clubs. These stores were located on streets like Arco de Teatro, which was down the Ramblas from the Liceo Theater where much of Barcelona's elite culture centered, and calle de Balmes in the upper-middle class neighborhood of Gràcia, north of the newly built Eixample. These locations mark cycling as an activity of the

⁷⁹ All of these specific ads and many more like them can be found repeatedly in the pages of *Los Deportes* over the course of its 1899-1900 editions.

professional middle class. In other words, the Barcelonan athletic community was a branch of the city's small but expanding class of business professionals that wielded increasing power within the city and searched for a cultural identity to match their financial clout.

The expansion of cycling clubs has several implications worth noting for the changes in middle class and elite culture they represented. First, the existence of such organizations outside Barcelona establishes that this was not simply a small collection of enthusiasts in cosmopolitan Barcelona. Second, interest in athletics represented a new trend for those with the money and leisure time to dedicate to the new activities throughout the region. Sport served a variety of functions for these new classes that made it a very attractive activity. Initially, there was the connection to regeneration that allowed any participant to feel as if he were helping the nation by staying fit. Beyond this basic impulse, exercising and competing in athletics meant enjoying bourgeois status and accentuating one's free time and disposable income. Various authors ranging from early works such as Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class* to more recent work like Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction* theorize and illustrate that money and simple leisure time can be used and applied to set classes apart from outsiders and to create bonds within a social group. Athletics in turn-of-the-century Spain served exactly that purpose for the small but emerging middle classes of Barcelona (and later in Madrid, Bilbao, and other cities as well). Sports such as cycling gave the participants a certain identity and camaraderie that set them off from the

common classes in a very visual manner as they zoomed along the streets of the city and countryside on their modern and decidedly “European” machines usually imported into Spain. The activity of cycling (or for that matter any sport) showed that they had the free time to engage in such activities and the resources to purchase and maintain bicycles, special sets of football clothes, and other sporting goods. In other words, the activity of cycling provided activity for youths, patriotism through fitness, social distinction, and vicarious association with a “European” activity. Sport was a perfect new way to establish an identity.

Bicycle transportation itself had interesting implications and benefits for identity creation. As well as a means of physical fitness and competition, the bicycle allowed club members to go out and see the country around which they were building nationalist (either Spanish or Catalan) attachments. Over a thirty-six kilometer trip outside of Barcelona, cyclists came into contact with the physical characteristics and real-life citizens of the nation they were envisioning. Essentially, cyclists discovered the actual land and people of the nation they wished to regenerate-- people that urban Spaniards rarely saw in person. Familiarity between urban dwellers and the country around them increased over the subsequent decades through programs such as bicycle clubs, excursionist trips of the ILE and other schools, and other athletic endeavors (in fact the early Sociedad de Excursiones was founded by ILE members). By the 1920s, these adventurers began bringing back pictures of almost every region in Spain and publishing them in journals for everyone to enjoy vicariously. The best example of this

is *Heraldo Deportivo*, a Madrid journal published from 1915 into and throughout the 1920s. *Heraldo Deportivo*'s pages are filled with pictures of the Pyrenees, La Mancha, Asturias, and dozens of other scenic trips excursionist bikers and hikers brought back to the cities. Such publications showed urban Spaniards what their country looked like and introduced them to a side of Spain that they had never seen. This helped create national identities and meant that in their own way the summer schools and trips of the ILE and the excursionist and mountaineering clubs across Spain were "nationalist" movements to some extent. In Barcelona, this often translated into support for the regionalist movement, particularly as bicycle races encompassed larger distances across Catalonia.

The potential of athletics for developing connections, identities, and small scale "imagined communities" went beyond the national to embrace the international also. While still in a nascent form, cycling was the first truly international sport to develop in Europe. Foreign competitions and bicycle clubs in other countries drew the attention of Spaniards founding their own societies at home. By 1900, newspapers not only reported on local races, but on foreign races and records as well. For example, as early as 1898, *Los Deportes* reported on new records in cycling set in France and the careers of boxers such as Tom Turner in the United States.⁸⁰ At this early stage, the athletic community was developing into an international one that drew its participants' interest beyond the borders of Spain and changed their frame of reference from the strictly

⁸⁰ *Los Deportes* 2, no. 28, 15 December 1898, 482-3.

regional or national.

This broadening of horizons operated both through the recognition of competitions in other countries and also in the transfer of language. As mentioned earlier, when founding the SGE the English word “club” was specifically avoided, but such linguistic influences would prove impossible to avoid in the long run. For example, in the discussion of Tom Turner the word “héroe” was emphasized by the Spanish writers and took on a greater meaning because of its foreign nature. As we shall see later, language transfer became particularly important in football where English terminology dominated the first decades of the sport’s existence in Spain and left many enduring legacies implanted in the vocabulary of football, such as the term “corner,” rather than the Spanish “saque de esquina.” These new athletic activities, therefore, had a wide range of effects on the creation of regional, national, international and class identities in the communities that developed around them.

This early sporting community also had connections to other cultural groups with the Barcelona bourgeoisie, most notably with the artistic avant-garde. Both art and sport were popular activities among the urban, professional middle classes and they served a similar role as a form of conspicuous consumption. An 1898 article in *Los Deportes* reported on a collection of races in the early Barcelona velodrome. The article also noted that one of the popular meeting places for club members was none other than the cafe “Els Quatre Gats” (The Four Cats).⁸¹ Although only open from

⁸¹ *Los Deportes* 2, no. 8, 15 February, 1898, 142.

1898-1903, this famous cafe was the center of Barcelona's internationally-recognized art community frequented by key figures of Barcelona's bohemian cultural, such as Miquel Utrillo, Pere Romeu, and the young Pablo Picasso.⁸² The cafe served as meeting point and clearinghouse for Barcelona's avant-garde artists, who strove to portray new ideas in both old and new artistic forms including sculpture, painting, architecture, music, poetry, and even puppeteering. It was run and organized by the painters Santiago Russinyol i Prats (the son of a factory owner) and Ramón Casas i Carbó (the son of a trader who made millions selling goods in the Americas). Both painters were influenced heavily by Parisian styles and both had pro-Catalan sentiments that they exhibited by glorifying the region's traditional activities. Partially because of these international leanings, the Quatre Gats also served as a social center for several of the city's cycling clubs. Indeed, not only did cyclists frequent the cafe, but Casas made a large painting of himself and Pere Romeo that overlooked the cafe's central room for a period of time.⁸³ The painting portrayed the pair pedaling a tandem bicycle through the countryside and enjoying their afternoon. Through such ideas and images, excursionists combined the new values of physical fitness and the modern technology of bike transport, with trips to see their region's countryside. As suggested above, this brought them into closer contact with the *patria* and paralleled the desire of the artistic

⁸² There are various good works on the turn-of-the-century Barcelona art community, although most are primarily concerned with its role in forming Picasso's work. Some, however, focus directly on Els Quatre Gats including Enric Jardí Casany, *Història de els Quatre Gats* (Barcelona: Editorial Aedos, 1972) and the catalogue book Marilyn McCully, *Els Quatre Gats: Art in Barcelona Around 1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

⁸³ Robert Hughes, *Barcelona* (New York: Vintage, 1992), 436-446.

avant-garde to connect the past and the modern age in their work.

This connection between artistic leaders and athletics was evident among the Catalan elite as well. This socially powerful group was also largely pro-Catalan, but maintained a thoroughly Catholic and conservative outlook. The best example is the Güell family who patronized Antoni Gaudí throughout his life.⁸⁴ The Güells rose to prominence as an industrial family in the second half of the nineteenth century and then inserted themselves into the Catalan elite. Gaudí's patron, Eusebio Güell, became a count in 1908 and carried himself as a mercantile knight in society. The family also had an interest in athletics and Eusebio's oldest son, Joan Antoni de Güell, became the leader of the Catalan Olympic committee and strove repeatedly to bring the Olympic Games to the city over the course of the 1920s. In other words, both artistic and athletic endeavors were different expressions of the Barcelona bourgeoisie and its subgroups asserting their own identity in a period when Catalan regionalism was developing into a significant political and cultural force. During the late nineteenth century, Catalan-language newspapers were reintroduced to the region and the Jocs Florales, a Catalan-language literature and poetry competition, became popular among the middle classes. There was also a resurgence of Catalan nationalism with the foundation of the Lliga Regionalista in 1901 as a conservative, Catalan political party representing Barcelona's professional middle class. The party focused on obtaining control over Catalonia's government, or at least limited autonomy from Madrid. The years from 1890 to 1920

⁸⁴ Hughes, *Barcelona*, 476-80.

were a golden age for Catalan architecture, led by Antoni Gaudí, Lluís Domènech i Montaner, and Josep Puig i Cadafalch. These three architects designed structures like the Parque Güell (1900-1914), the Palau de la Música Catalana (1908), and the Casa Amatller (1905), respectively, that changed the face of Barcelona and made the city a paragon of art nouveau architecture.⁸⁵ The athletic movement, then, developed in accord with Barcelona's political and artistic communities and was another important side of the city's expansion and middle-class self expression. In fact, the connections between athletic communities and artistic communities existed in cities across the Spain. The growing urban, professional middle class used both activities to create new identities for themselves, especially after 1910 when the pace of Spanish economic and social modernization rapidly increased.

Later Development of the RSGE

After the enthusiasm surrounding the second, third, and fourth national conferences of the FGE, sport in Spain expanded to every corner of the nation from 1900 to 1920. A historian of the FGE has referred to the period from 1901 to 1921 as "la Cueva" or "the cave" because the organization was small and contained during those years, compared to the subsequent growth of the FGE. During those two decades the organization expanded gradually and gained the recognition and support of the elite and the Spanish state. The resources of the FGE increased in accordance with this growth.

⁸⁵ Fusi, *Un siglo de España*, 33.

Between 1901 and 1921, the FGE expanded from two hundred to six hundred affiliated societies across Spain and as the center of the organization the original SGE in Madrid also experienced massive growth in its activities and resources.⁸⁶ They added new sections for those members interested in all sorts of different sports including fencing, boxing, fighting, track and field, mountaineering, and swimming (there were already sections for the earlier sports like cycling and football). The SGE purchased its first field (supposedly the first in Madrid for sports, although that honor probably belonged to the ILE) at calles Rodríguez San Pedro, Gaztambide, Meléndez Valdés, and Hilarión Eslava just off of calle Princesa. These fields were located in the growing middle-class neighborhoods of the northwestern section of the city, and near where Ciudad Universitaria would be built in the 1920s. This location clearly identified the SGE as a middle-class institution and the society's subsequent fields would be in similarly middle-class neighborhoods. Nor did the SGE's members limit themselves entirely to sports either. They also supported Madrid's art community by holding various art festivals over the years and establishing an art section of the SGE. The Madrid athletic community's interest in art kept them in line with their compatriots in Barcelona and reveals that in Madrid also the growing professional middle class was interested in both activities as a means of establishing their identity.

As it became more prominent, the SGE organized a series of annual athletic festivals in Madrid in the largest venues they could fill and obtained increasing support

⁸⁶ Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 24.

from the greater community over the course of the late 1900s and 1910s. The first of these was a Semana Deportiva organized in 1908 for the Exposiciones del Retiro of that year. It proved to be a popular event and the Liberal mayor, Alberto Aguilera, awarded the SGE a “flag of the conqueror” for their accomplishments in spreading athletics and “conquering” physical degradation. Aguilera’s support was also significant because he was a very active mayor who strove to modernize Madrid during his term. He also energetically supported the first Cope del Rey football tournaments in Madrid and served as a president of the Sociedad del Tiro Nacional de España founded in 1900 at the Ateneo de Madrid. This form of week-long celebration became increasingly popular and provided a model for other, smaller groups across the nation where smaller towns held their own events in the 1910s and 1920s. In 1915, for example, the Ayuntamiento of Segovia sponsored a Fiesta de Cultura Física that featured football, but included all sorts of athletic competitions in which the community watched and participated.⁸⁷

One small event in 1924 provides a representative picture of the type of activities that went on at these regional athletic festivals. Between September 21 and 28, 1924, Valladolid held what it called a Semana Deportiva Municipal that was run by the various sports clubs of the city and supported by the local city government.⁸⁸ The festival was meant to bring in enthusiasts from all over Castilla-Leon and as a result the

⁸⁷ Juan Manuel Santamaría, *¡Al fútbol! Una historia del la Sociedad Deportiva Gimnástica Segoviana* (Segovia: Artes Gráficas Taller Imagen, 1998), 14.

⁸⁸ The main source for this section is a pamphlet/guide to the rules and events of the festival located in the collection of Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid, Club Deportivo Español, *Semana Deportiva Municipal: programa, bases y reglamentos* (Valladolid: Imprenta Castellana, 1924).

festival's organizers overtly emphasized its regional character. The Semana Deportiva, therefore, was not just as an athletic event, but a forum for the development of a regional identity. The week was organized by an executive committee, but there was also a committee of honor through which important local figures were associated with the event. This committee of honor included the current captain-general of the region, the civil and military governors of Valladolid, the Archbishop of the region, the rector of the local university, the president of the provincial council and the mayor of Valladolid. As well as these civil authorities, the presidents of the Federación Castellano-Leonesa and the Club Deportivo Español de Valladolid were also members of the honor committee so that the regional athletic organizations were honored as well.

The festival opened with a ninety-five kilometer bike race from Valladolid to Palencia and back, with an unnamed art piece valued at 250 pesetas as the prize for the winner. The artistic prize suggests that the same social bourgeois groups were interested in sport and art in Valladolid, just as in Barcelona and Madrid. The festival organizers divided the race into two sections, with an upper division for licensed members of the Unión Velocipédica Española and a lower division for those who were not part of the national cycling society and presumably were not as good. The bike race was followed by a week of track and field competitions including discus, javelin, long jump and 3,000, 1,500, and 100 meter footraces. Finally, the festival ended with a six kilometer cross country race. Participants entered the competition either as individuals or teams and there was even an overall team competition that totaled the points of

individuals from each team in all the different events. The club competition represented the highest level and brought with it significant awards, specifically “una placa de plata alegórica” for the first place club and a silver cup for the second place one. All these events were part of a fairly typical local athletic festival and give us an idea of what they were like. Such *Semanas Deportivas* were community activities that brought towns and regions together. The competitions provided topics for discussion in the bars, homes, and cafes of a town and forums for men to impress women and people they wanted to know without needing to be professional athletes, all in the purported cause of national fitness and revitalization.

The most important and largest of these local festivals were in Madrid, where the original SGE became increasingly popular. The SGE usually held these festivals in the Gran Teatro in Madrid, but other years saw the annual event held in open fields around the city or in the plaza de toros de Tetuán de las Victorias. These Madrid events usually included competitions in the parallel bars, rings, fencing, boxing, and other sports that demonstrated both strength and skill, as opposed to the primarily outdoor activities most common in the countryside. In 1912, the society held a special celebration for the silver anniversary of the organization with the three surviving founders of the society, Narciso Másferrer, Emilio Coll, and Eduardo Charles presiding over the events.⁸⁹ In the same year, the SGE football section made it to the final match of the still new football cup tournament. In fact, during this early period the SGE team

⁸⁹ Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 25-28.

dominated football in Madrid, winning the regional title five straight years and its players would later join other clubs across the country, showing that it was an important force in the capital's football development as well.

In 1916, the SGE took yet another step up in status and national profile. The 1916 festival included over nine hundred participants and the king and queen presided over the event. The royal attention resulted from rapid growth the organization experienced during the 1910s and the high profile the festivals held in previous years had brought them. The festival celebrated the official grant of a royal title by King Alfonso XIII, raising the FGE and SGE to the Real Federación/ Sociedad Gimnástica Española (RFGE/SGE). The center of the festival was a massive ceremony including the trumpets of the Regimiento de Rey, children from Escuela Aguirre and Escuela Pías de San Antón, the Colegio de Guardias Jóvenes, cadets from the Academia de Infantería, fireman and gymnastic teams.⁹⁰ These different groups that were a part of the event signified the various sections of Madrid society that supported the society. The royal regiment denoted the king's approval of course, but more significantly the various *colegios* and schools represented emphasized the SGE's interest in physical education and the cause of regeneration by improving the physical health of the race. Lastly, the participation of the Academia de Infantería served as a reminder that the military was interested in many of the same regenerationist goals. The event was an impressive spectacle and a sign that the organization was reaching an extremely

⁹⁰ Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 26.

important level of influence and respect all across the nation.

During the 1910s, there was a spate of new organizations founded by the FGE and people who had been a part of it throughout Madrid. In 1914, the national federation founded the Sociedad Deportiva Obrera in an attempt to bring the gospel of physical education to the working classes. This attempt brought little in return, however, because workers generally shunned it and instead became increasingly interested in football clubs that were more entertainment oriented and did not come with a social message. Also the rising tide of public interest produced a wide variety of independent societies focusing on a specific sport. The first cross country national meet was held on February 6, 1916, thanks to the organization of a group called España Sportiva. On September 30, a set of rules for the Federación Castellana de Atletismo was established and within months of this new local group's establishment, the Real Federación Española de Atletismo was founded at Atocha (San Sebastián). These events produced local and national governing bodies exclusively for track and field and in September 1917 the first Campeonos Nacionales of track and field were organized in Spain.

Essentially, the RSGE of Madrid became a fully developed and networked organization with a huge following. In 1922, the society had over 1,400 members without differentiation or official hierarchy in the RSGE. All members paid a monthly fee of five pesetas (which was raised for the first time in a decade in 1922).⁹¹ Because

⁹¹ Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 31-36.

of the continued emphasis on educating children, there were youth memberships for three pesetas and some gyms even allowed children to play for free. The RSGE maintained gyms in Madrid on calle Libertad, calle Marques de Leganés, and calle Barbieri and fields at calle Princesa, calle Diego de León y el Andrés Mellado, calle cea Bermudez, calle Guzmán de Bueno and calle Donoso Cortés. Importantly, all of these fields were all located in newly urbanized middle-class neighborhoods of the northwestern part of the city where the SGE's white-collar membership mostly lived. The organization also saw its revenues explode from an average of 20,000 pesetas a year between 1917 and 1920 to 52,093 pesetas in 1921, a huge jump in membership and influence. Further recognition of the society's service and nationalist goals came in 1924 as the new dictator, General Primo de Rivera, went to great lengths to prove that he had only taken control to provide the "strong hand" needed to revitalize the nation. He had the Ministry of Public Instruction start to provide the RSGE with annual funding, initially of 1,500 pesetas and in a few years state support was raised to 2,000 a year to provide government support for their efforts at physical regeneration. The moment that most signified the maturity of the RSGE as an institution was the purchase and construction of a new central office, gymnasium, and playing fields. The project began with the goal of a large complex in March 1920, and in a little over a year they had gathered 12,000 pesetas from the contributions of its *socios* for its purchase and construction. Land was purchased at 20 calle Barbieri and 27 calle Libertad just north of the Gran Vía in the most modern part of Madrid and the location exemplified that

new level of importance the society had attained. They renovated the building that ran between the two streets over the next year and turned it into a complete gymnastic center. Beyond the 12,000 pesetas spent on the land, the society spent 28,411 on construction of the gymnasium and 17,852 on the purchase and refit of the fields.⁹² The center opened on March 6, 1922, and they played the first match at the companion fields at Diego de León on June 4 against Real Madrid F.C..

With new fields and a modern gymnasium purchased for a huge outlay of money, the organization started by four officemates and their friends in 1887 had clearly come a long way. Over its thirty five years of existence, the RSGE had spearheaded the introduction and popularization of athletics within Spain, gaining a royal title, government support and money, and recognition from a range of regenerationist thinkers hoping to revitalize the nation. While it would continue to be important after 1922, the gymnastic organization had reached the height of its popularity and had already been overtaken by one of its step-children, football specific clubs. It is entirely appropriate that the RSGE's 1922 celebration of the opening of their new gymnasium and fields was not held as a gymnastics festival, but as a football match against what was already the largest and richest club in Madrid, Real Madrid. As we shall see, the athletic movement introduced and founded by members of the ILE and RFGE would be overtaken and eventually dominated by football clubs that shifted the emphasis from the pedagogical, regenerationist, promotion of physical education to the

⁹² Sevilla Gómez, *Sociedad Gimnástica*, 29-31.

unyielding pursuit of on-field victory. This change would be gradual and contested at every step, but for good or ill, the combination of mass consumerism and spectator sport would prove far more powerful than any political or pedagogical ideology that might oppose it.

Chapter Two:

The Arguments for Sport

At the turn-of-the-century, the people of Spain were caught up in nationwide debates about the nation and its identity. This nationalist dilemma existed because the country experienced a spotty and regionally divisive industrialization, the degeneration of its political system, and a crisis over national vitality triggered by the humiliation of the Spanish-American War of 1898. These painful experiences led many of the nation's citizens-- especially the politicians, bureaucrats, and bankers of Madrid and the entrepreneurs of Barcelona and Bilbao-- uncomfortable with who they were supposed to be and what being Spanish meant. Everyone asked questions about what had caused Spain's fall from grace and they were given voices by the varied writers of the Generation of 1898. Writers with wildly different goals and backgrounds, from the liberal reforms of Joaquín Costa to the more conservative glorification of the imperial past of Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo, all agreed that Spain had problems that needed fixing.

The 1890s and early twentieth century also witnessed the introduction and rapid growth of physical education programs that changed Spain permanently, with the stated goal of physical regeneration leading to national regeneration. The Institución Libre de

Enseñanza (ILE) introduced programs of physical education in its school and these ideas were picked up by other groups across the nation. Similarly, the Real Sociedad Gimnástica Española (RSGE) began from a base in Madrid and founded gymnastic societies that promoted sport in every significant urban area in Spain. Driving this growth were the sporting communities of Barcelona, Madrid, and Bilbao, whose societies and newspapers drew in middle-class support and provided resource bases that smaller regions could draw upon.

Spaniards embraced exercise and sport wholeheartedly because athletics provided both answers to and distractions from the weakness revealed in 1898 and the social and political problems of the subsequent decades. Just as importantly, athletics were a new, modern activity popular in the European world that had left Spain behind in the nineteenth century and the nation wanted so desperately to rejoin. Athletics answered the call for regeneration by focusing on the nation's physical and metaphorical body. Schools like the ILE embraced the educational ideal of experiencing the world, rather than just reading about it and, therefore, supported physical education and the idea of balance between mind and body. These modernizing groups also had strong ties to the Spanish Liberal party which strove to use the power of the state to introduce athletics as well. Other organizations, such as military schools like the Artillery Academy of Segovia, embraced athletics because military gymnastics was one of the oldest and most utilitarian applications of physical education. All of these arguments coalesced to produce a very "nationalist" argument for the importance

of physical education that used the language of medicine and anatomical science to justify its position. The rationale for most athletes was that their actions strengthened Spain and medical science was employed to demonstrate this assertion, particularly in the 1920s when the Spanish medical community itself was gaining skill and importance.

Simply knowing that these developments happened does not explain why they had such resonance. To do so, this chapter examines and explains the specific influences on and goals of the Spanish athletic movement between the 1880s and 1930. These organizations and individuals have left behind useful books, newspaper articles, journals, conference transcripts, and doctoral dissertations that reveal several arguments set forth by proponents of athletics in the early-twentieth century. These arguments were derived from European sources, copied by Spanish thinkers, transformed to fit the Spanish case, and produced an approach to physical education that responded directly to the Spanish movement for national regeneration. This chapter traces the most important of these arguments to present a nuanced explanation of the ideology that they represented.¹

Before delving into the Spanish movement itself, however, we will discuss the main international movements that preceded and inspired their Spanish counterparts. Nineteenth-century physical education in Europe was dominated by three movements that came out of the three most powerful nations of the period: Britain, Germany, and

¹ The development of sport into a mass entertainment activity will become a central argument in later chapters of this book. In the early period covered here, however, it will be left as a fear that haunted the implanters of athletics in Spain. That fear was not truly realized until the 1910s and 1920s and detailed treatment of it will be left to the chapters that deal with that period.

France. Each had a distinctive style and was not limited to its own country, but they clearly had separate methods and effects. The first was British public school ideology and the model of muscular Christianity that developed within Britain during the mid to late nineteenth century and informed the ILE's approach in particular. The second great influence was the Swedish and German gymnastic movements that went back to the start of the nineteenth century and informed much of the theory underlying the RSGE. Finally, the international Olympic movement organized by the Frenchman Pierre de Coubertin appeared in the 1890s and grew to dominate and focus the organization and measurement of athletic prowess and combined it with an international ideal.

These three sources inspired Spaniards seeking national regeneration and provided them with theories and agendas that they could transform to create their own approaches suited to Spanish circumstances. Most thinkers started with assumptions of Spanish racial "degeneration" or "decadence". From this starting point, the implantation of athletics was asserted as a solution to the national problem because the nation's fall from power was often portrayed as a racial decline. Naturally, the solutions emphasized that the forms of exercise introduced needed to conform to and complement the natural abilities of the Spanish race to create the ideal Spaniards. Most writers emphasized that simple strength failed to create the best individual and that a balance between strength and agility was preferable and more suited to the Mediterranean race.

After establishing this general goal, the proponents of sport made physiological,

anatomical, and pedagogical evaluations, and suggested specific changes that would help regenerate the nation. Maniel Cossío and Marcelo Sanz, for example, made one of their central principles the difference between physical education, which its focus on developing the body, and sport, which emphasizes competition and only develops the body as a byproduct. Similarly, every writer emphasized the idea of balance between the physical and mental as the key to developing more capable individuals. This idea of balance was one of the strongest and most consistent themes of the Spanish athletic movement and derived directly from the British public school tradition. From there, Cossío, Sanz and other writers focused on the basic level of muscle use in exercise and measured the costs and benefits of numerous activities to the subject's physical health. The pedagogical benefits and costs of football, cycling, track and field, and other sports were measured, and some sports were emphasized over others based primarily on their all-round benefits versus risk of injury. Included in the assessments of different sports were discussions of the non-physical benefits of athletics, in general, and team sport, in particular, because the Spanish writers accepted the idea that fair play and learning to function as part of a team were critical lessons learned on the field. Finally, an outline of what was acceptable for women in the arena of Spanish athletics also emerged with different perspectives on sport's role in defining gender roles that represented the liberal and conservative strains of thought within the intellectual elite.

Foreign Influences

British Public Schools

The Spanish athletic movement's pedagogical approach drew most heavily from the late nineteenth-century British public school system. Both Giner de los Ríos's own studies in England and the experiences of many of the ILE's professors, who were educated there, establish the connection between them. In fact, in many ways the ILE was modeled upon Eton, Harrow and Oxbridge. These professors brought back with them a cult of athleticism that by 1900 had almost grown to overshadow intellectual development in British schools. It was impossible for anyone educated in Britain between 1860 and 1914 not to see physical education, and specifically football, rugby, cricket, and rowing, as vital elements of how Britain educated its youths. Whether they approved or not, you only have to look through the pages of the satirical cartoon newspaper *Punch* to recognize their importance in the British system.

The origins of this system went back to the late 1840s, when the headmasters of British public schools had increasingly supported the development of team sport as a means of social control over their teenage students.² Headmasters like Edward Thring at Uppingham, Nathaniel Woodard at Lancing, C.J. Vaughan at Harrow, G.E.L. Cotton at Marlborough, and Hely Hutchinson Almond at the Scottish school Loretto all supported and promoted the development of school athletics from the late 1840s into

² There are numerous books on this topic, but the key work is J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

the 1860s. Athletic participation was encouraged through the development of annual matches both between schools and between the different houses within each school. Peer pressure from within came from the desire for athletic achievement to gain popularity among friends. Also, headmasters granted important positions to organizations such as the student run Philathletic Club at Harrow that ran the school's in-house athletics and thus became a source of prestige.

As sports became more popular and ingrained, elaborate systems of dress and colors developed, creating a social hierarchy based primarily upon athletic capability and achievement. With each passing decade after 1850, this system became increasingly important and was reinforced by the continued support of past generations and graduated classes. At the suggestion of headmasters, parents and graduates increasingly provided money to improve playing fields and equipment, giving athletic endeavors their monetary and moral support. The expansion of such resources is dramatic and reveals how pervasive a change occurred. For example, the acreage owned or leased for games by the schools Harrow, Marlborough and Uppingham went from 8, 2, and 2 respectively in 1845 to 146, 68, and 49 in 1900.³ In fact, athletics became so popular within schools that by the 1890s a cult of anti-intellectualism developed around them, which lowered the value and social standing book learning and education. Talk about sports competitions came to dominate every aspect of student life from a student's social standing to the newspapers they read. Between 1866 and 1906,

³ Mangan, *Public School*, 71.

for example, thirty to forty percent of all the pages in the *Marlburian*, the newspaper of the public school Marlborough, were dedicated to sports. This number was fairly typical and does not even include the ancillary attention given to sports, such as poems about conquests on the pitch that filled the poetry sections of the newspapers.

The early British headmasters who introduced athletics into their schools saw them as a way to keep students away from the traditional vices of idle youths. Students engaged in competition had little time for roaming the countryside, pelting locals with stones, and idling with girls. Later in college, it kept them away from gambling, drinking, and horse racing as well. As an anonymous contributor to the Scottish quarterly *Blackwood's Magazine* suggested in 1866 "...better to go to bed early tired out by cricket than to sit up drinking; better hours of relaxation on rivers than galloping a wretched hack along the turnpikes or over fens for a bet."⁴ Other arguments focused on the cohesion and identity created by team sports for both the school and the houses within the schools. This was particularly important because most students in British public schools came from the upper and middle classes. As adults, many of these public school graduates worked as bureaucrats, some in a company's office, others in branches of the government, still more as colonial administrators. Other public school students from the landed gentry never expected to work at all. For both groups, the songs and poems that filled school newspapers and called their schoolmates to fight and sacrifice for the school or house, created an identity for the entire group that they

⁴ *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. C, no. 612 (October 1866), 148.

carried into their later lives. The daily experience of competition created bonds between teammates and collective identities that survived long after the students graduated from school. The classic example of this development was the annual cricket match played between Eton and Harrow at Lord's Cricket Ground in London. The match drew graduates of both schools into the stands, from current students to aging members of the government, and all felt some sort of kinship tie to those of their school through that experience. This collective experience had important effects and public schools had 'Old Boys' clubs all over the British empire. These clubs helped their members maintain personal connection in situations as diverse as the jungles of Burma and the trenches of the Somme, providing a model for other nations to emulate.

Playing competitive sports served as a reinforcement of social and gender roles in British public schools as well. As a rule, the students at British public schools were exclusively upper (or at least middle) class, and they were entirely male (with a few girls schools set up along similar lines). The education that students received at these schools presumed that their subsequent careers would be white collar and generally did not involve physical labor (with the one exception of military vocations). Athletics, therefore, served as a way to keep this elite group physically strong in the absence of manual labor. Athletic competition also reproduced the male gender role of the strongest creating the most favorable impression among women as well. Then as now, ladies were invited to come watch the sporting prowess of their young suitors and were expected to be impressed by strength, speed, and capability. In Spain, the conservative,

physician Gregorio Marañón seized upon both of these social roles as a great benefit through which sport could be used to maintain traditional social and gender roles.

Defenders of athleticism argued that it taught morality and “fair play” to participants. Athletes were taught to “play the game” as hard and as honestly as possible and carry with them a desire for action and fighting spirit into their later lives in business, government, and the military. By 1900, the production of brave, spirited young men through athletics became a crucial goal of the British public schools. Further, these new youths turned out by British public schools came to embody culture and the elitist civilization of the powerful British Empire. Their education prepared them for white-collar jobs that marked any graduate as at least middle class. This was the education system after which the ILE modeled itself in Spain and where so many of the institution’s teachers and leaders were educated. As a result, the ILE in Spain developed as a notably elitist institution as well. Despite the ILE’s sincere desire for democratic reform, the actual people who were involved remained almost entirely from the professional middle class throughout its existence. It would have been astonishing if they had not brought similar ideas and the sports they had played in Britain to Spain. The school also educated and maintained strong connections with many of the Liberal Party politicians between 1875 and 1923. As a result, Spanish Liberals, such as Segismundo Moret, actively promoted physical education in general, and the British approach in particular; most notably the idea of balance between the physical and mental that became a central tenet of Spanish athletics.

Gymnastics

The second international athletic model was the gymnastic programs that developed in Germany and Sweden over the entire nineteenth century. Instead of focusing on team action and competition in general, the gymnastic tradition focused specifically on developing the strength, flexibility, and endurance of the body through continuous and scientifically designed exercises. This approach began in Germany and became important there because it specifically sought to unite and strengthen the German nation. The gymnastics movement produced several nationalist revolts in the early nineteenth century and played a role in the gradual unification of the Second German Reich, finally achieved by Otto von Bismarck in 1871. In Germany, it was a heavily conservative movement that strove to promote traditional values and support the conservative unification process, although it would most strongly be promoted in Spain by liberal reformers looking for “European” solutions to their weakness.

The start of this movement went back to 1793 when J. C. F. GutsMuths wrote the book *Gymnastics for Youth*. GutsMuths based his book on his own teaching experience, the methods in the new discipline of pedagogy he had learned while studying at the University of Halle, and from his own students who came from Germany, France, Denmark, Hungary, and Portugal. From these varied influences he created a system of physical education to be used in schools. The book helped stimulate the introduction of gymnastic activities into German schools and, once it was translated,

the rest of Europe as well. It gained particular support from a variety of Prussian military officers. As a result, Prussian education reforms appeared as early as 1809 and almost always included the addition of a gymnastics program.⁵

Soon after, however, a new and “more patriotic” form of gymnastics appeared in Germany. F. L. Jahn, a teacher in Berlin, developed a system called *Turnen* that swiftly became the most popular form of gymnastics. The popularity of *Turnen* came from its explicit goal of developing national unity and independence from France that fueled a desire to participate and develop physical strength through exercise. Gymnastics clubs sprang up all over Germany, and despite a shaky relationship with the new gymnastics program, the Prussian state gradually provided state support. In 1844, the Prussian Ministry of Education passed a bill promoting physical education in all of its schools, and by 1847 the first classes at the Prussian Central Gymnastics Institute in Berlin had begun.

Official state support brought a significant change, with the introduction of the second great approach to gymnastic training, the Swedish school. As early as 1813, Per Henrik Ling had founded the Royal Gymnastics Central Institute for the training of gymnastics instructors in Stockholm, with himself as principal.⁶ His teachings at the school in the first half of the nineteenth century provided the basis for the Swedish gymnastic movement. By mid-century, Ling developed a sophisticated program that

⁵ For a good brief introduction the development of the early German gymnastic movement in English see Roland Naul, “History of Sport and Physical Education in Germany 1800-1945,” in *Sport and Physical Education in Germany*, eds. Roland Naul and Ken Hardmen (London: Routledge, 2002), 15-27.

⁶ Naul, “Physical Education,” 15-27.

strove to improve physical capability by developing certain muscles and restricting the use of apparatuses, such as the horizontal and parallel bars. This program gained acceptance within the medical community across Europe and was able to present itself as a “scientific” program. When the German government decided to organize its own Central Gymnastics Institute in Berlin, two military officers, Major Hugo Rothstein and Lieutenant Gustav Techow, were sent to study at the Swedish school. In 1847, Rothstein became director of the Berlin school, where he stayed until 1863 and introduced the Swedish Ling system in competition with the German *Turnen* tradition.

Finally, a third phase dominated the German gymnastics movement from 1870-1914. This was the Speiss system which blended the German tradition and several Swiss ideas about gymnastics. The Speiss system had three core aspects: free exercise of the arms and legs, apparatus exercising on horizontal and parallel bars, and exercises to order such as marching. This brand of German gymnastics blended educational goals with militaristic/national ones and would be embodied by the German Gymnastics Federation established in 1868. The federation later fought against the invasion of English sport-based, physical education that provided an alternative route to physical health. German gymnastics emphasized balance, discipline, and order as the route to physical and mental well being. They compared it to the ‘English disease’ of kicking a ball around, competitive activities, and the constant desire to break records.⁷ The preoccupation with competitions and records over balance and personal development

⁷ For a good discussion of this divide in the sporting world see John Hoberman, *The Olympic Crisis: Sport, Politics, and the Moral Order* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1986).

remained a significant barrier between the two communities for decades and hold some similarities with the division between “gentile” middle-class sports like tennis and “aggressive” working-class sports like boxing.

Many of the supporters of the Spanish physical education community looked to this German tradition. Although the British model clearly dominated in the ILE because of the English leanings and education of many of its professors, the RSGE in particular drew inspiration from the German and Swedish models. Most obviously, the idea of founding a gymnastics society in the first place had come from the French gymnastics society, which was itself modeled after the German system. More specifically, one early proponent of gymnastics in Spain, Eduardo Utor Sotomayor, adopted the Swedish model for the system of education he wanted to develop within Spain. Sotomayor recognized the importance of Per Henrik Ling’s teachings in the first half of the nineteenth century, citing them in his own works on the topic. The early Madrid gymnasium owner and athletics promoter Marcelo Sanz also looked to foreign and particularly military gymnastics models to help create better programs for physical education in Spain. In *Ensayo de una higiene deportiva o los deportes ante la higiene*, he opened with a discussion of the 1913 conference in Lausanne, Switzerland on the “Psychology and Physiology of Sports.”⁸ The conference addressed the difference between physical education and sport. They discussed the ways in which sport could be harnessed to remold the body and used to teach various skills. Such discussions were

⁸ Marcelo Sanz Romo, *Ensayo de una higiene deportiva o los deportes ante la higiene* (Madrid: La Correspondencia Militar, 1913), 10.

doubly important for attending Spaniards who were choosing which sports to promote within their own country. Their attendance also questions how much freedom of choice Spanish promoters of sports actually had. To some degree, Sanz and his contemporaries had to accept the international valuations of the different sports because they brought with them acceptance into the international athletic community. The difference between the British and German models would play a significant role in the difference between sport and physical education that will be discussed below.

There was, however, one important difference. The German gymnastics movement was an overtly conservative organization that strove to use physical education and disciplined exercise to emphasize traditional values. Further, the German movement held strong ties to the Prussian military, which was a strongly conservative institution, which contrasted starkly with the Spanish military, a proponent of liberalism for much of the nineteenth century. The RSGE, Marcelo Sanz, and other Spaniards interested in gymnastics (as opposed to sport) in Spain, were certainly more politically centrist than the ILE and other groups that took their lead from Great Britain. Nonetheless, almost everyone in favor of physical education programs in Spain had liberal leanings. This was primarily because the act alone of looking towards Europe for modernization was a “liberal” approach within the staunchly conservative country, still politically dominated by a rural agrarian elite. As a result, a conservative gymnastic program from Germany became a program promoted by the Spanish Liberal party, although gymnastics original conservative nature made it a more acceptable

activity for Spanish conservatives as well.

The Olympic Movement and Other International Movements

The last great foreign influence was the international Olympic movement. The Olympic movement blended many of the ideals of the sports movements of the time. It emphasized the amateur ideal and drew support from the educated elite in Britain, France, and the United States. To this background that mirrored that of British sport was added the ideal of internationalism. Sport was supposed to unite the world in a brotherhood of competition. The first modern Olympics were held in Athens in 1896 and were the brainchild of Baron Pierre de Coubertin, a Frenchman who dedicated his life to the development of sport.⁹ Born in 1863, Pierre de Coubertin was many things: aristocrat, historian, journalist, social critic, and educational reformer. In his youth he developed into a dedicated Anglophile who believed confidently in the English public school educational system as the root of British economic and imperial power in the world.¹⁰ With the ideal of balance between mind and body entrenched in his theoretical approach, Coubertin gradually became an important promoter of educational reform in

⁹ Two solid histories of the institution of the modern Olympics to look to for more detailed discussions are Richard D. Mandell, *The First Modern Olympics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976) and John J. MacAloon, *This Great Symbol: Pierre de Coubertin and the Origins of the Modern Olympic Games* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).

¹⁰ As a youth, Coubertin read and re-read books such as Thomas Hughes's *Tom Brown's School Days* about life as a student at Rugby. Hughes's book told nostalgic stories about fights, pranks, studies, and sports from a student's perspective and these stories became the ideal education that the otherwise critical minded Coubertin embraced. As the young man began to travel and write, his interests repeatedly brought him back to physical education and sport and the idea that the ideal education needed to maintain a balance between the physical and intellectual.

France, a position that his aristocratic social standing and wealth made easy to achieve.¹¹

In the summer of 1889, Coubertin was sent to the United States by the French Ministry of Education and once he returned decided to dedicate himself to a campaign to develop sports within France. He began organizing the French sports clubs ranging from cycling to football to rowing and united them as the Unions des sociétés françaises de sports athlétiques (U.S.F.S.A.) in 1890.¹² With this society established he began organizing competitions, inviting international visitors to join in and compete, and dropping hints about holding an Olympic games. In June 1894, Coubertin organized what is usually referred to as the “Congress of the Sorbonne” with delegates from twelve countries, including Spain. At this conference, he announced the goal of establishing a modern Olympiad. Two years later, on Saturday, April 5, 1896, the Athens games opened in the stadium Herodes Atticus with roughly 120,000 people and the Greek monarchs in attendance.¹³ From this start the Olympic movement grew gradually, bringing in more and more athletes and nations in a spirit of internationalism and athleticism as the century progressed. The new athletic spirit and Olympic ideal provided a third important influence upon the young Spanish athletic organizations embraced to prove their own modernity.

Not surprisingly, many Spaniards did use the movement as a model for their

¹¹ Mandell, *Modern Olympics*, 57-9.

¹² MacAloon, *Great Symbol*, 156-159.

¹³ Mandell, *Modern Olympics*, 123.

own development and strove to become a part of it over the years. Marcelo Sanz looked directly to Coubertin for his fundamental definitions. For example, Sanz accepted the basic idea that sport was “the cultivation of intensive physical endeavors, that carried with them some risk” that he credited to Coubertin. Sanz felt that this definition was the “most clear and expressed best the current fad of athletics” that was spreading across Europe.¹⁴ Sanz also recognized the other movements with a similar international ideal to that of Olympic sport, such as the significant inroads that the Boy Scouts had made within Spain. Although limited to the larger cities, they represented another international institution that emphasized a similar set of ideals, which linked morality and physical capability. In fact, the expanding amateur sports movement, led internationally by Pierre de Coubertin, and the Boy Scout movement, headed by Robert, Lord Baden-Powell, had strikingly similar approaches.¹⁵ They both drew upon rhetoric that balanced the racial goals of national improvement, strove to be perceived as forms of education, and sought to be politically neutral. It is, therefore, not surprising that the Boy Scouts also made inroads into Spain where amateur athletics were welcomed so whole heartedly.

The Olympic movement also emphasized a certain vitality and strength as fundamental to an individual’s or a nation’s power and advancement and placed at the

¹⁴ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 15.

¹⁵ For good discussions of internationalism and the Boy-Scout movement see John Hoberman, “Toward a Theory of Olympic Internationalism” *Journal of Sport History* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 15-17; Tim Jeal, *The Boy-Man: The Life of Lord Baden-Powell* (New York: Morrow, 1990); and Michael Rosenthal, *The Character Factory: Baden-Powell and the Origins of the Boy Scout Movement* (New York: Pantheon, 1986).

heart of the Olympic ideal the idea of progress and improvement. Records in the different events became more and more important and the Games became an institution that forces participants to choose between the vitality and glory of victory and the decorum and chivalry that led to defeat.¹⁶ This development was given one of its most fundamental formulations by the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset in his great work *The Revolt of the Masses*. Ortega wrote that “in the physical effort connected with sport, performances are ‘put-up’ today which excel to an extraordinary degree those known in the past...we must note the impression that their frequency leaves in the mind, convincing us that the human organism possesses in our days capacities superior to any it has previously had.”¹⁷ The foremost Spanish thinker clearly understood the competitive drive inherent in the Olympics and connected the practice of sport with the development of vitality and strength within the nation. This idea of record performance popularized by the Olympics had clear effects in Spain and would provide a measuring stick for how far the nation was behind the rest of the world.

Finally, the Olympic movement had more concrete effects on the Spanish sports world in later decades. By 1920, Spain would begin sending more and more complete delegations to each Olympics and it would be the triumphant second-place finish of the first Spanish football team to compete in the event that provided the first springboard for the sport’s mass popularity. From that point, the chairmanship of the Spanish

¹⁶ For a more complete and universal discussion of the Olympic movement and perceptions of vitality and decorum see chapter four “The Critique of Olympia” in John Hoberman, *The Olympic Crisis: Sport, Politics, and the Moral Order* (New York: Aristide D. Caratzas, 1986), 81-85.

¹⁷ José Ortega y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930; reprint, New York: Norton, 1960), 43.

Olympic Committee would be a significant office, held for much of the 1920s by no less eminent a personality in Barcelona than the Baron Joan Antoni de Güell, son of the patron of the great architect Antoni Gaudí. Similarly, Barcelona also mounted two distinct attempts to host the Olympic Games prior to the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The city bid for the 1924 and 1932 games, building a stadium as part of each bid, and even managing to get Coubertin to visit the city to judge their preparations in 1923. In all these various forms, the model and international leadership of the modern Olympic movement, therefore, played a clear role in the development of Spanish athletic theory and activities. Along with the British public schools and German gymnastic programs, the Olympic movement provided the inspiration, direction, and prestige that the Spaniards would focus into their own national brand of athleticism.

Racial Degeneration

The argument that the problem facing the Spanish people was a general decline of the race directly reflected political and social developments and the interest in *regenerationaismo* between 1880 and 1930. The first writers appeared as early as the 1880s, when liberals who were part of the “extended Institución” (people connected in some way to the ILE) became interested in physical education and its potential for creating stronger Spaniards. These early thinkers saw their ideas gradually picked up by the growing athletic communities surrounding the FGE in the years after 1898, when the events of the war thrust regeneration into the center of the national dialogue. As the

immediate impulse of the war faded, work in the area slowed, although significant works were still produced by men like the pro-military gymnasium owner Marcelo Sanz. Finally, renewed political problems and the increased pace of urbanization in the 1920s brought a last round of interest in the hygienic benefits of physical exercise before the civil war. This last group emphasized medical arguments and rationales for the introduction of physical education. Almost all of these later writers held doctoral degrees in medicine and as such brought established authority to the field.

As early as the 1880s, writers seeking to rejuvenate Spain identified physical decline as part of the national problem and they conceived of it as part of a general decadence of the Latin race. One of the first writers to put forth this idea was Adolfo Buylla in an 1889 *Boletín de la Institución Libre Enseñaza (BILE)* article. Nine years before the disastrous military defeat, Buylla suggested that:

La triste comprobación de esta verdad la encontramos en lo que queda de aquella raza latina un día varonil y vigorosa capaz de las más grandes hazañas y de la más épicas empresas; y hoy débil y afeminada por culpa de una serie de generaciones juramentadas para hacer escarnio y befa de cuanto significa el cultivo del cuerpo.¹⁸

Buylla focused directly on the weakness of the body and his language suggested a incremental fading of the race with each generation. Another *BILE* writer, Adolfo Posado, reinforced and personalized this idea by considering it from a parental perspective. “¿Quién puede desconocer que el hombre verdaderamente culto, se siente

¹⁸ Adolfo Buylla, “Libro de M. Daryl sobre la educación física (fragmentos de un estudio),” *BILE* 13 (1889): 162.

unido, por una solidaridad mística e indefinible, con las generaciones venideras, y que su salud, no sólo vale como suya, sino como condición de la salud de sus hijos?”¹⁹ The quote emphasized that physical fitness should be seen on both the individual level and as a physical representation of the race and nation. Within this metaphor, an ailing body represented a rotted limb of the nation, leeching resources without any return of capability and initiative. From the perspective of the athletic movement, this problem had overtaken the nation and had to be fixed directly for the nation to recover. Focusing on education and children added an extra and more personal layer of importance to the argument as well. The next generation would inherit the family wealth and position that the small Spanish middle classes were working so hard to obtain. It was natural for them to grasp these ideas because they provided their children a leg up when looking for a job in the Banco de España or some similar bureaucratic institution that could secure the family’s station in society.

The reasons for physical degeneration ranged from urbanization, disease, and war, to the lack of physical education programs. On a basic level, the conglomeration of people into urban settings was identified as one of the key reasons less-capable individuals dominated. People had moved to the cities and ceased the daily labor that had made strong Castilian bodies, especially among the slowly growing middle-classes that now worked in offices. Manuel Cossío’s first causes for degradation were “la

¹⁹ Adolfo Posada, “Problemas actuales de la educación nacional,” *BILE* 19 (1895): 6.

miseria,” “la falta de aire,” and “la falta de sol.”²⁰ These were all common complaints about life in urban areas around the world, urban physical degeneration was even the topic of government studies in London, so in this criticism Cossío was in line with modernization. He continued that these conditions produced the “falta de sangre en las venas” and anemia, drawing a clear line between living conditions and racial degradation. Other arguments saw problems within the education system itself. Aniceto Sela, for example, asserted that excessive study itself caused problems because it created physical changes that reduced the individual’s overall capability.

El atiborramiento de las enseñanzas dadas casi de una manera mecánica, el afán malsano de saber pronto muchas cosas, mal o bien, todavía agravado por el sistema corruptor de exámenes y premios producen un desequilibrio de fatales consecuencias para la salud física y moral de la infancia y a la larga de la degeneración de la raza que a cada momento hay ocasiones de comprobar.²¹

Sela, therefore, saw degeneration as the result, at least partially, of the traditional Catholic system of catechistic pedagogy and government examinations. Embracing physical education provided the ideal of a balance between mind and body arming Sela and other members of the ILE with another weapon to attack the Spanish education establishment with and produce the reforms they were fighting for.

Other writers were more specific about the results of failing to maintain the physical well being of the race. Adolfo Buylla directly connected lack of physical development with several diseases that weakened the nation. “...El abandono del

²⁰ Francisco López Serra, *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza: historia de la educación física de 1876 a 1898* (Madrid: Gymnos Editorial, 1998), 102.

²¹ Aniceto Sela, “La higiene escolar en la Academia de París,” *BILE* 11 (1887): 292-94.

cuerpo durante una larga serie de generaciones, conduce por la vía recta a la escrófula, al raquitismo, a la tisis, a las afecciones neuróticas, a las naturalezas enclenques y desmedradas.”²² He connected these specific diseases directly with the weakness of both individuals and of the race in general and argued that the only cure was the implantation of physical education. Buylla, Sela, Adolfo Posada, Cossío, and most other people concerned with physical education agreed with this approach although some, like Sela, felt that more had to be done. For example, the founder of the ILE, Francisco Giner de los Ríos, recognized that for the working classes that made up a large percentage of the nation, more needed to be done because they were the farthest from the potential reforms of secondary education.²³

Finally, others looked to the regular wars over the previous century as a drain on the physical well being of the nation. Ricardo Rubio argued that the War of Independence against Napoleon, the Carlist civil wars, and various colonial wars had taken the best blood of the nation.²⁴ He argued that those who died were the most capable and strongest; they left behind the weak and infirm to pass their genes on to the next generation (although the doctors of the period did not understand exactly how genes worked or had even coined the term yet). Further, losing the best of each generation did not simply happen through combat, but hundreds and thousands died of disease as a result of epidemics that ran through concentrated troops and from the

²² Buylla, “M. Daryl,” 167.

²³ Francisco Giner de los Ríos, “El problema de la educación nacional y la clases ‘productoras,’” *BILE* 24 (1900): 1-5, 129-35, 193-99.

²⁴ Ricardo Rubio, “De educación física,” *BILE* 22 (1898): 107.

tropical settings in which Spain fought its colonial wars. In other word, both combat and the concentration and location of Spain's colonial wars had drained the nation of its best men.

These arguments and patterns of thought were especially vital to contemporary thinkers because of the dominant scientific theories of the day. Darwin's theories of evolution had been largely accepted in Western Europe by the 1890s, but many biologists still rejected the idea of natural selection. However, social theorists often embraced a garbled version of natural selection that drew on the ideas of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck. Lamarck argued that qualities and attributes learned or developed over a lifetime could be passed on to one's children. This understanding of evolution made physical fitness, or lack thereof, an inheritable quality that needed to be either cultivated or lost and was widely accepted across much of Europe and the Americas. The conditions of life in the increasingly large cities at the turn of the century, the exclusion of physical education within the nation's schools, and the instability and warfare of the nineteenth century, therefore, were believed literally to have sapped the strength of the race until it reached the depths of 1898.

Two decades later analysis of these physical failings became more scientific, but the argument remained essentially the same. The best example of this later phase is Dr. Joaquín Decref, a member of the Real Academia Nacional de Medicina and speaker at the 1919 conference of the Sociedad Española de Gimnástica. Decref went beyond the general criticisms of the Generation of 1898 and argued that an important aspect in

Spain's decadence and fall from international importance lay in the decline of the nation's physical capability and health since the sixteenth century. He declared bluntly that because they have not instituted programs of physical education "nuestra raza estaba degenerada, que la ruina era inminente."²⁵ He concluded by directly contrasting the "valor, resistencia, fuerza y voluntad" of Spaniards in the sixteenth century, despite worse hygienic conditions, and their general ineptness in the twentieth century.

Marcelo Sanz, the important early gymnasium owner and founding member of the RSGE suggested the same problem six years earlier in the opening paragraph of one of his books. He wrote "en los actuales momentos puede decirse que España se halla en pleno resurgimiento deportivo; tal es la presión que ejercen las costumbres de otros pueblos de Europa y de América sobre nuestra idiosincrasia nacional: la pereza."²⁶

Sanz recognized the advances that had been made in introducing athletics to the country between 1900 and 1913, referring to the changes of that decade as "la invasión deportiva." In so doing, he made it clear that Spain was seriously deficient athletically and collectivized the problem into a "national laziness" that is analogous to the national decadence other writers attacked. The focus on physical weakness was vital because it translated the nation's general failures into one that could be fixed by improving the physical health of the nation. This line of argument co-opted the national problem into one that athletics resolved by providing balance between the mental and physical-- and

²⁵ Joaquín Decref y Ruiz, *Necesidad de implantar en España los laboratorios de deportes: Conferencia dada en La Sociedad Española de Gimnástica* (Sevilla: Tipografía "La Exposición," 1919), 13.

²⁶ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 9.

gave proponents of sport the answer.

In his 1925 book, *Educación física*, Emilio Porras graphically illustrated this athletic backwardness by going through the track and field world records and comparing Spain's record with the international ones. Porras looked through all the Olympic records since the reintroduction of the games and discovered that in that time only one Spaniard had even made it into an international semi-final. To drive this comparative weakness home, he also produced a chart that compared the international, Spanish, and Castilian records in all the major track and field events.

	World Record	Spanish Record	Castilian Record
Races			
100m	10"2/5	11"	11"1/5
200m	21"	23"1/5	23" 2/5
400m	47"3/5	51"	52"3/5
800m	1'51"9/10	2'1"	2'5"3/5
1.500m	3'52" 2/5	4'15"	4'25"
5.000m	14'28"3/5	15'41"3/5	16'28"
10.000m	30'23"1/5	32'50"	35'12"
Marathon	2h 18'59"	2h 54'	3h
Jumps			
High	2.04	1.8	1.7
Long Jump	7.76	6.815	6.5
Triple Jump	15.525	13.57	13.57
Pole Vault	4.21	3.36	3.2
Throws			
Shot Put	15.545	12.495	12.495
Disc	48.36	41.44	35.2
Javelin	66.57	48	41.4
Hammer	57.742	33.41	33.41

Table 2.1 World, Spanish, and Castilian Records in 1925²⁷

Porras's chart revealed several important facts about the state of Spanish athletic development. First and foremost, Spanish athletic skill was poor at best. In every event the Spanish best is well off of the international time or distance and it is only even close in the shorter races where smaller time differences are natural and smaller numbers signify larger differences. In all events, the percentage difference between the Spanish records and the world records were significant and verged upon embarrassing.

²⁷ Emilio Cesar Porras Forero, *Educación física: Concepto general, desde el punto de vista higiénica, de los deportes actuales y su acción benéfica o perjudicial en el desarrollo de la juventud* (Madrid: Ciudad Lineal, 1925), 42-43.

The second revealing aspect of the chart is that only four of the sixteen Spanish records were held by Castilians, a fact made obvious by comparing the Castilian and Spanish records. That Catalans and Basques held most of the Spanish records made it painfully clear that Spain's athletic development mirrored its economic and urban development. Catalonia and the Basque country had built industrial institutions and urban lifestyles more in tune with European models than anywhere else in the country. Between 1900 and 1930, thousands of immigrants from the countryside flocked to both cities and gave them the two fastest growing populations in the country. It was logical, then, that those areas produced the most vibrant sporting cultures in the country as well and through athletic records provided direct, concrete examples of this superiority. Further, recognizing that Spain, and particularly Castile, was behind the curve athletically meant recognizing that the sources for athletic revival were European. The avalanche of new uniforms, rules, and everything else related to the new 'matches' came from other countries were an important acknowledgement of weakness and acceptance of the developing European world.

Racial Theory

The desire to introduce physical education programs was backed by an array of scientific analyses that broke down exercise into rational activities focusing on different parts of the body. Almost every writer on this topic drew upon the foreign influences of the gymnastic movement and British public schools for their ideology and some even

cast analyses of what sports became popular in different countries in racial terms. For example, Federico Reparaz suggested that football gained popularity in countries “parvulos” or subservient such as Czechoslovakia.²⁸ In comparison, he viewed track and field as the athletic arena of the nation’s *maestros*, most prominently represented by the United Kingdom and the United States.²⁹ This served as both an analysis and a warning to a Spain in the twenties rapidly embracing football and in his view marking itself as one of the lesser countries.

Most writers, however, strove to create a program of education attuned to the Spanish nature in particular. Joaquín Decref argued that the “races to the north” built up an idealized physical form that embodied sheer size and strength.³⁰ In comparison, he promoted a Spanish ideal that focused more upon the blending of strength with speed and agility, than on simple brute strength. Decref illustrated the difference in racial ideas through a comparison of representative paintings then in the gallery of the Museo del Prado in Madrid, the Hercules of the Spanish Baroque painter Francisco de Zurbarán and a Hercules by the Flemish painter Peter Paul Rubens. He described the Hercules of Zurbarán as strong, but also agile, capable of “reacciones rápidas y violentas, saltar, correr; debe predominar en aquella arquitectura la astucia de la movilidad.”

²⁸ Federico Reparaz, *Deportes atléticos* (Madrid: Calpe [Biblioteca de Deportes], 1924), 9.

²⁹ On the surface, this appears to be inconsistent given the popularity of football in Britain. Reparaz, however, focuses on middle-class sport and football was primarily a working-class sport in Britain by the turn of the century.

³⁰ Decref, *Necesidad de implantar*, 10-11.



Illustration 2.1 Hercules Fights with the Erymanthian Boar, Francisco de Zurbarán, 1634.

Zurbarán's image shows Hercules actively fighting a boar on one foot and wielding a club athletically, emphasizing his agility and not strength alone.³¹

In comparison, the northern European image is “abultado, gigantesco, elefantiásico, parece hecho y así resulta, para ejecutar movimientos de gran fuerza, pero lentos y resistentes, más con arreglo a la cantidad que a la calidad.”

³¹ Zurbarán actually painted a series of the ten labors of Hercules that all use similar active imagery. I am not sure which of these painting Decref referred to and have chosen the one that best illustrates his argument.



Illustration 2.2 Hercules Drunk, Being Led Away By a Nymph and a Satyr. Peter Paul Rubens, 1611. The Dresden Gallery, Dresden, Germany.

This idea can clearly be seen in Rubens's painting of the drunken Hercules. Rubens's portrayal is certainly of a strong, powerful man, but it is hard to envision this Hercules as capable of more than simple feats of strength.

In the next paragraph, Decref repeated this imagery by claiming that in circuses the great leapers were primarily Africans, Italians, and Spaniards, while northern Europeans were the musclemen. Finally, Decref's third example reiterated his point and emphasized his "scientific" rationale for racial difference that he attributed to

different characteristics like geography. Decref argued that the differences in the northern and southern European races were analogous to those between Arabian and Norman horses. He described Arab horses as “enjuto de musculatura, de líneas suaves y elegantes, y tenéis el cabello ágil, corredor y cuyos pequeños esfuerzos son duraderos teniendo la particularidad de ser muy resistentes aun mal cuidados.” In comparison, Norman horses are portrayed as admittedly two or even three times as powerful as the Arabians, but “las condiciones de agilidad, ligereza y resistencia que tiene un caballo árabe no lo conseguirías con todo la raza de caballos creada en Normandía.” For Decref, this versatility resulted from the diversity of the Spanish landscape and the Mediterranean in general. Because Spaniards had to deal with such a variety of environments they learned to adjust. This provided him with a pseudo-scientific rationale for his ideal Spaniard and called upon the very geography of the country as his defense, something everyone could support. This placed Decref among a large number of theorists at turn-of-the-century, who embraced Social Darwinism on the national scale as a means of explaining the success and characteristics of nations.

Decref and the Spanish supporters of sport needed to emphasize the forms of physical activity they promoted to implant exercises that would develop the “Spanish” ideal. Emilio Porras advocated this directly and used football as an example.³² He asserted that Spaniards were inherently individualistic and that football did not fit them. As a result, in Porras’s view football was the ideal sport to be introduced in Spain

³² Porras, *Educación física*, 32-33.

because it taught individualistic Spaniards to work as a team. Football, therefore, was believed to be able to help rectify the Spaniards greatest failure, a deep rooted individuality. Importantly, this idea of answering the nation's weakness gave the theorists another way to adopt the credibility of current science and assert their own nation's difference and, subtly, the superiority of their physical ideal. Essentially, it sold physical exercise through a nationalist appeal.

Balance Between Mind and Body

While some supporters of gymnastic programs saw physical degeneration exclusively as the fundamental cause of the nation's weakness, most thinkers placed physical failures within a larger context, the ideal of a balance between the mind and the body epitomized within the British public school ethic. Like their British predecessors, Spanish supporters of physical education called upon classical models of ancient Greece and preached a harmony of mind and body that demanded education and training of the body as a prerequisite for the successful development of the mind. Physical degeneration, therefore, was portrayed as the culprit for Spain's failure to modernize and develop scientifically, intellectually and as an industrial nation as well as the simple physical failings previously discussed. In 1888, Manuel Bartolomé Cossío provided a seminal example of such thought with what was essentially a mission statement for the application of sports within the ILE. He wrote:

El ideal moderno de la escuela, según el cual este debe ser una institución educativa en el amplio concepto de la palabra, ha despertado entre sus

exigencias, y como una de las más imperiosas, la de la educación física; y esta exigencia se ha respondido en todas partes la disminución de horas de clase, la mejora de los locales y el mobiliario, la gimnasia, y los juegos corporales, los pasaos ciertos días de la semana y las excursiones dominicales más largas. No puede hacer más la escuela mientras se trata únicamente de rectificar el carácter intelectualista del programa antiguo, armonizando el descubrimiento de los dos elementos esenciales del organismo humano: el psíquico y el físico.³³

Cossío, therefore, agreed with the traditional ideal of a balance between the mind and body being necessary for truly effective education and growth and at the same time associated that approach with “modern” methods of education. His stature increased the importance of this viewpoint. It was published in the *BILE*, the organ of the ILE, and Cossío himself served as director of the Museo Pedagógico Nacional established in 1882 by Royal Decree.³⁴ Cossío was also Giner de los Ríos’s former student and closest collaborator, tying his ideas even closer to the ILE. Similar arguments were made by Giner himself on the need and value of athletics in the education of youths. He argued that athletics favored and developed physical health and provided an excellent school of character, personal bravery, resolution, and the submission to rules.³⁵ “El egoísmo, el sentimentalismo y la debilidad tiene que desaparecer, el elogio y la censura en los labios de sus iguales mantienen el pundonor del niño.”³⁶ Therefore, he saw sport as providing an outlet for the expression of moral and intellectual learning that the classroom restrained as well as a field of learning through individual experience, which

³³ Manuel Cossío, “Las colonias escolares de vacaciones,” *BILE* 12 (1888): 205.

³⁴ Francisco López Serra, *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza: Historia de la educación física de 1876 a 1898* (Madrid: Gymnos Editorial, 1998), 36.

³⁵ Ricardo Gurriarán Rodríguez, *Aportación de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza a la educación física del siglo XIX* (Santiago de Compostela: Tórculo Artes Gráf., 1996), 82-3.

³⁶ Francisco Giner de los Ríos, *Obras Completas* (Madrid: 1927), vol. 16, 282.

his pedagogical approach venerated. This lesson was regularly accepted by later writers who looked to the ILE as the cutting edge of Spanish pedagogical thought. For example, Federico Reparaz quoted Francisco Giner de los Ríos's "Ensayos sobre educación" in defense of the idea that children needed to be taught morals to grow strong with the implication that sport should be used to produce such morals.³⁷

The ILE was not the only group that emphasized the balance between mind and body as the ideal pedagogical approach. Marcelo Sanz directly argued that both sides of the human organism had to be developed. He asked what point there was in developing a capable mind and imagination if the hand was incapable of building and using that information to any constructive purpose.³⁸ Sanz made his position starkly clear by opening his chapter on football in *Ensayo de una higiene deportiva o los deportes ante la higiene* with a quote from Demolins. The quote affirmed "una educación bien entendida no debe descuidar ni el espíritu ni el cuerpo, porque estos dos elementos son indispensables al hombre. No debe sacrificarse ni el espíritu al cuerpo, ni el cuerpo espíritu; se establecerá entre los dos, siempre que sea posible, un justo y perfecto equilibrio."³⁹ Sanz drove home this position by emphasizing that it was the combination of the physical and mental that produced the technology that allowed humanity to advance. Bluntly, scientific development came through people seeking solutions to physical problems. He cited the invention of bicycles, automobiles, and

³⁷ Reparaz, *Deportes atléticos*, 11.

³⁸ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 19-22.

³⁹ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 112.

planes as attempts to increase transportation and speed in the real world and suggested that initially they were “sporting problems.” This rationale had clear overtones of contemporary arguments, such as the idea of the Protestant Work Ethic as a means for explaining northern European success. Obviously, Sanz was influenced by the northern European sports movements discussed already, which took the idea of applied knowledge as a foundation and built physical education upon it.

In a representative 1902 doctoral dissertation in the field of medicine, Eduardo Utor Sotomayor set out this ideal of a balance between the mind and body in more scientific terms. He wrote:

El *automatismo* es precisamente el elemento de fuerza instintiva opuesto al del elemento de fuerza intelectual llamado *atención*: resulta pues, un descanso del cerebro y un ejercicio óseo-muscular que compensa el gasto de energías que aquel tuvo en su tarea y un dispendio del sistema loco-motor, cuya fuerza sinérgica estuvo almacenada durante su tiempo de reposo; quedando al final del ejercicio perfectamente equilibrado el organismo, siendo este equilibrio el sostén del bienestar físico.⁴⁰

This paragraph is Sotomayor’s key to why physical education needed to be included in the schools. Its center is the need for balance between the physical and the intellectual. He couched this balance in scientific language that connected it to the medical community and the authority that community carried. Sotomayor continued by explaining that ignoring the body produced bad physical habits that first were temporary (*deformación pasajera*), but later became permanent (*deformación completa*) and that

⁴⁰ Eduardo Utor Sotomayor, *Sobre gimnástica escolar, elemental é higiénica* (Algeciras: El Porvenir, 1901), 11.

this happened to school children.⁴¹ For example, students resting their elbows on the table and heads in their hands led them to lean forward, contracting their pectoral muscles, and stretching their backs. Extended time spent in that position resulted in their shoulders rising, their chests compressing, and their backs expanding producing an unnatural physical form and eventual problems in their thoracic cavity. A second example is that children often sit with the front of their feet touching and their heels apart at desks rather than the proper position, having their heels together and a 45 degree angle opening between their feet. Sotomayor claimed that over time this deformed the legs to physically hinder their capability, especially when combined with malnutrition. These are several of the classroom problems Sotomayor illustrated in semi-scientific language, making the point that classroom and book learning alone did not produce ideal men. The five or six hours a day spent in such positions needed to be balanced with hygienically acceptable physical activities that countered such problems.

To answer this need for scholarly balance, Sotomayor suggested a three year program of study to certify gymnastics teachers so that someone in each school could act to provide students this balance. He divided the first year into courses on theory, including anatomy with dissections, educational and military Physiology, and courses on practice, such as physical exercise and weapon training. The second year or “Maestro de gimnástica” taught the importance of hygiene, the mechanics of movement, and pedagogy and gymnastics for the child. Finally, in the third year the

⁴¹ Sotomayor, *Sobre gimnástica*, 12-13.

focus became orthopedics and practice at hospital clinics. Sotomayor hoped this solid education for teachers would give them the skills to counteract the negatives of an entirely academic education.

On the other hand, Manuel Bastos explained the benefits that would develop if people were active and played a sport regularly starting in their youth. He suggested that people in general, and youths of less than twenty in particular, could reach what he called *el estado de entrenamiento*-- a higher physical state that almost made them a different species. Bastos cited studies from Germany and the United States showing that athletes who regularly exercised had a respiratory capability almost twice that of a normal person, twice the amount of blood flowing through their heart, and far greater reserves of energy. “Todo el equilibrio del organismo se encuentra desplazado en el sentido de una mayor estabilidad funcional.”⁴² Bastos recognized that such development could only come over a long period of time and consistent, dedicated work. But he argued that the effort was worth it because the youth or young adult gained not only enhanced physical ability, but “la sensación de bienestar, de confianza en sí mismo del individuo *siempre en forma*.”⁴³ The natural conclusion was that these fit, healthy individuals would be more capable of doing their jobs well and creatively whether in the office or elsewhere. Bastos also was working to improve the physical side of the race to improve it over all. He simply chose to focus on the positives of

⁴² Manuel Bastos Ansart, *Dos charlas sobre deportes* (Madrid: Imprenta Zoila Ascasibar y Compañía, 1927), 22-23.

⁴³ Bastos, *Dos charlas sobre deportes*, 25.

change, rather than the negatives that needed to be corrected.

Finally, the need for a balance between the physical and mental was best summed up in the 1920s by Emilio Cesar Porras Forero. He wrote that “la Higiene, como fin, es el resultado físico de una serie de buenos hábitos morales, y en sus trabaos para la conservación de la salud y de la vida digiérase que busca estos mediante una acción sobre el cerebro.”⁴⁴ In other words, physical well being and moral and mental well being were one in the same-- so both had to be educated for *la raza* to recover from its fall.

Separation of Physical Education and Sport

Another important division established by reformers was the division between sport and physical education. Both were recognized to be within the same arena and had effects on the body, but their goals were fundamentally different because physical education *focused* on the body and sport only *used* the body, with physical fitness being a positive, but coincidental, byproduct. As Marcelo Sanz wrote:

La educación física del hombre comprende dos partes, completamente distintas en su modalidad: una, la gimnasia racional de desenvolvimiento armónica; otra, la gimnasia de aplicación y deportiva, los juegos y los deportes.

La gimnasia de desarrollo es ante todo ‘somática’; la gimnasia de aplicación es sobre todo ‘psíquica.’ El todo constituye la educación física: la gimnasia educativa, que se base en el análisis por el razonamiento. El deporte, en cambio, se base en la síntesis por la emotividad.⁴⁵

This summed up the approach nicely, placed gymnastics and sport under the same

⁴⁴ Porras, *Educación física*, 9.

⁴⁵ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 16.

umbrella, but also established their difference and assigned them different roles stemming from their different impulses. Gymnastics was seen as the expression of rationality and physical harmony, while sport spoke to the emotions. This analysis placed gymnastics on a higher level, yet recognized the superior drawing power and interest in sport because as Sanz put it “tiene más atracción el deporte que la gimnasia, porque le es más fácil al hombre moverse por impulsión que por razonamiento.” This is an important point and hints at the later popularity of sports. As we shall see, after being initiated by this elite idealistic motivation, athletic endeavors in Spain would soon be dominated by the impulse and emotion of sports and football that became businesses. Indeed, writing in 1913 Marcelo Sanz could already see this corruption of the original amateur sporting ideal happening as the first football stars, such as Pichichi, emerged.

From this general division between physical education and sport, the positive and negative merits of each were weighed in the balance. One of the most significant problems with sport was seen as its tendency to overwork a player’s body. Sanz suggested that sports had a “cierta cantidad de trabajo que no es posible graduar.”⁴⁶ In other words, during a competitive match you cannot put in a halfway performance or build up to maximum effort as is a critical part to gymnastic workouts. When the ball is in the corner you have to sprint all out, without moderation or caution, or your performance will be seen as failing the team. As a result, he argued that “los casos de fatiga y de agotamiento consecutivos á los ejercicios deportivos son demasiado

⁴⁶ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 16.

frecuentes, y los puede observar cualquiera.”⁴⁷ This lack of moderation in sport was seen as a clear negative that produced injury and debility, rather than physical health, limiting sport’s effectiveness as a tool to improve the race. Most writers, however, recognized that this was only a minor criticism. As Dr. Bastos put it “las grandes estadísticas demuestran que el deporte sólo es causa del uno por ciento de los accidentes y lesiones de todo orden que necesitan asistencia médica.”⁴⁸ While this number excluded motor sports, it is also from 1927 when athletics were much more common than twenty years earlier. Clearly then, the risk of athletic injury was not that serious a fear and was relegated to a caution for those who participated.

The lack of moderation in sports also produced distinct cultures that did not conform to what was, academically, the ideal physical form for the Spanish race. For example, in football the limited use of the arms and massive emphasis on the legs created the ideal of a small chest. Similarly, in cycling the nature of the sport emphasized overworking the heart that often had serious physical complications later exactly because it was an immoderate form of exercise and of course both emphasized the development of the legs out of balance with the arms.⁴⁹ These problems were fostered largely within separate football and cycling communities for outward goals (i.e winning) instead of for the perfection of the body and were thus seen as dangerous variants. As Sanz phrased it “la obsesión del campeonato y el record crean la ambición

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bastos, *Dos charlas sobre deportes*, 38.

⁴⁹ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 17.

del aplauso y del lucro, desnaturalizando el objeto del deporte...el vigor físico, la salud, y la belleza de la raza.”⁵⁰

As early as the 1910s the dangers of popularization and money were recognized as the greatest threat to the positive benefits of sport. On one hand, expensive equipment turned the sport that used it into the “patrimony of the aristocracy” and stopped that sport from positively affecting the majority of the population. More importantly, however, proponents of physical regeneration attacked professionalization. The ongoing battle between professionalism and amateurism will be covered in greater depth later regarding football, which would become the primary battleground. Briefly, however, professionals took the average person away from sports entirely and reduced him to a spectator through the production of what were even then referred to as “espectáculos públicos.” Sanz complained as early as 1913 that this had already begun to happen in Basque pelota which “los han prostituído los propios profesionales, resultando en un espectáculo como los toros, donde los aficionados lo pagan y no lo ejercitan....”⁵¹ Comparing professional athletes in a sport to prostitutes selling their services was strong condemnation. It is also significant that Sanz saw bullfighting not as a sport, but as a public spectacle. Bullfighting was the dominant form of mass entertainment at the turn of the century and regenerationist writers regularly condemned bullfighting as a cruel symbol of the decadent past, and as an activity that distracted the public from more beneficial endeavors. Early writers, such as Marcelo Sanz, used

⁵⁰ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 18.

⁵¹ Ibid.

bullfighting as an example of what sports should not be, and thus echoed the ideals of both the elitist Olympic movement and German gymnastics movement. Nonetheless in the 1910s and 1920s, football rose to emulate and even challenge bullfighting as a form of mass entertainment. The professionalization of sport that resulted became a serious problem and gradually overwhelmed the participatory, amateur ideal with the acceptance of professional players in 1926. The writers of the day recognized this with fear, such as Federico Reparaz, who warned in the introduction to his 1924 book, *Deportes atléticos*, that increasing professionalism and the conversion of sport into a mass spectacle was destroying much of its benefits.⁵²

Others warned of the opposite extreme and argued that nothing was as bad as people seeing sport as automatically producing health and mental fitness and participating in it when they did not really want to. The cautionary perspective came from Dr. Manuel Bastos Ansart in the opening minutes of a radio broadcast given in 1927 on Unión Radio. Bastos was a well-respected physician who worked in various hospitals, including military hospitals, and developed an international reputation for treating war injuries. He was also politically conservative and, as a result, only cautiously embraced the arguments for physical hygiene so popular among liberals. Bastos's conservatism also reveals itself in his view that nothing was sadder than a woman playing tennis, without any real interest, because of someone's suggestion. He emphasized that it is perfectly possible to be healthy without participating in athletics

⁵² Reparaz, *Deportes atléticos*, 8.

and that there are losers as well as winners on the field of play.⁵³ The argument directly reflects his preference for more traditional gender roles that kept women off of the field of competition. Bastos also echoed the fear of professionalism by pointing out that young boys were not driven to play by a desire for better health, but through the desire for glory, conquest, triumph.

Despite the fears of sport as opposed to gymnastic training, Spanish regenerationist writers believed it did have numerous positive aspects that made sports far from useless in the cause to save the patria. As Sanz summarized “se practican al aire libre, que obran de un modo más intenso sobre el desarrollo psíquico, que exigen más rápida concepción de las cosas, que obligan á resoluciones enérgicas, que la inteligencia está siempre despierta, etcétera....”⁵⁴ Sports then were accepted to have wide-ranging positive benefits that their participants learned in competition. As Dr. Bastos wrote in 1927, it brought players outside into “el aire libre de los estadios ha aventado de sus cabezas los viejos fantasmas de la impotencia orgullosa, de la timidez, de la soledad mental.”⁵⁵ From that later vantage point, he claimed that sport had led the youth of the day to dream less and act more and helped create the difference between generations that Pio Baroja emphasized in his various works. Sport taught the new generation basic coordination and quick thinking under pressure as they constantly readjusted their goals and tactics. The cornerstones of sport, combat, speed and

⁵³ Bastos, *Dos charlas sobre deportes*, 16-18.

⁵⁴ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 17.

⁵⁵ Bastos, *Dos charlas sobre deportes*, 18.

balance, provided the new generation with a central advantage over those that had come before and a noted improvement to the race.

Perhaps the greatest benefits, lauded by almost every advocate of Spanish physical education, were the positive effects of team sports. Drawing directly on the muscular Christianity and British public school ethic, Spanish proponents of athletics argued that team competition produced teamwork and constituted the “gran escuela de disciplina.”⁵⁶ Team sports taught teamwork and morality that would filter into the ideas of honor and correct the behavior of rebellious young boys. The growing unrest in Spain politically and socially in the first decade of the twentieth century gives this aspect particular resonance. Anarchists and socialists were few in number, but were increasingly organized, and their protests against the government grew more confident with each year. These changes were typified by the Tragic Week in Barcelona in 1909 when the city rose up to protest the call-up of more troops to fight in Morocco.⁵⁷ Although the Tragic Week was a working-class protest, youth in the twentieth century have long been seen as dangerous radicals and educating them correctly to keep them out of such movements was important to the elite. As Decref argued, “la elección de juntas, selección de juradores, adjudicación y distribución de premios, y lo que estas cosas influyen en el dominio de las pasiones, educan a los hombres desde niños a

⁵⁶ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 17.

⁵⁷ For a best discussion of the Tragic Week and its causes see Joan Connally Ullman, *The Tragic Week: A Study of Anti-Clericalism in Spain 1875-1912* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968).

ejercer la ciudadanía con justicia y disciplina.”⁵⁸ These benefits were also pointed out by Emilio Porras in his book *Educación física: Concepto general, desde el punto de vista higiénico, de los deportes actuales y su acción benéfica o perjudicial en el desarrollo de la juventud*. He wrote that “el deporte, juego de adulto, es el único medio práctico de atender al organismo, que abandonado si sólo dispusiéramos de la árida disciplina de la gimnasia; el deporte puede servir la necesidad de desarrollo armónica de la economía, el deporte tiene una influencia en la vida moral.”⁵⁹ Through this Porras reasserted the same ideas of moral development and the attainments of a greater physical capability or economy. He went on to highlight different specific benefits that would be produced by regular participation in sport. “Por cuanto de serenidad y sangre fría para la lucha, cultiva el instinto de sociabilidad, enseña a perder y a veces subordina el esfuerzo individual al mejor éxito de un triunfo colectivo; el deporte es pasión, y por él pueden modificarse costumbres...”⁶⁰ Porras, then, saw sport as producing calmness under pressure and teaching sociability by forcing players to work together. Players learned how to lose and how to win as a group as well, which he presented as important life lessons that civilized the population. This was a particularly important lesson because of the prevailing view that one of the great defects of the Spanish race was that they were too individualistic. The perspective was expressed vividly by Salvador de Madariaga, a Spanish writer, diplomat, and historian, who traveled Europe extensively

⁵⁸ Decref, *Necesidad de implantar*, 14.

⁵⁹ Porras, *Educación física*, 11.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

and worked for the League of Nations. In his 1929 book, *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards: An Essay in Comparative Psychology*, Madariaga described Spaniards as people of passion who live in “popular-anarchical” communities that are not strictly organized and structured.⁶¹ This sort of perception led Spanish proponents of sport to see extra benefits to team competition because it could help eliminate this “debilitating” national characteristic.

Finally, as Porras suggested in the above quote, sport was fueled by passion and thus had the power to change old customs and traditions. Men such as Porras and the Generation of ‘98 valued this ability to bring change and progress because it helped develop the nation. Sports like football provided an opportunity to bring Spanish culture in line with the rest of Europe and break Spain out of the conservative shell of “doctrinas, rutinarias y en sus precarios clasicismos.”⁶² Sport was a new, modern, and increasingly popular activity throughout the continent and the world. As we have seen, the amateur Olympic movement was internationally important and fueled by idealistic sources from all over Europe and the greater world as well. Reparaz noted proudly in 1923 that the 1908 London Olympics had more than 300,000 spectators, was held in a new 45,000 pound stadium, and included 2,645 athletes from 44 countries.⁶³ The leaders of the RSGE and other such groups in Spain knew these facts and wanted to be part of them. Similarly, football began to reach importantly large dimensions by the

⁶¹ Salvador de Madariaga, *Englishmen, Frenchmen, Spaniards: An Essay in Comparative Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 1929).

⁶² Porras, *Educación física*, 12.

⁶³ Reparaz, *Deportes Atlético*s, 12.

1920s, although it did not blossom into its truly massive dimensions in Spain or internationally until after World War II. Football was made an Olympic sport for the first time at Antwerp in 1920 and the English league was already professional at that point with other leagues soon to follow. As a result, Reparaz could write in 1924 that “unos ven en ella la más palmaria muestra de nuestra próxima definitiva incorporación a la cultura europea...”⁶⁴ This was an obvious and powerful benefit to developing athletic programs. Bluntly, the rest of the West was doing it and the rest of West was more powerful than Spain as the Spanish-American War and the national crises of self-confidence had made horribly clear. Developing football clubs, national sides, and Olympic athletes provided Spain with a forum in which national pride could be defended and where Spain could develop *along* with Europe rather than be left behind again. This was a powerful motivation that gained athletics support from everyone from King Alfonso XIII on down in Spanish society.

Evaluation of Different Sports

Both the racial emphasis on different physical ideals and the distinction between physical education and sport led to discussions and evaluations of the different sports that could be played. Proponents of reform weighed the advantages and disadvantages of various sports for both for physical exercise in general, and in terms of which would be better for the Spanish physique in particular. Their approach used physiological and

⁶⁴ Reparaz, *Deportes Atlético*s, 8.

anatomical arguments to categorized sports into groups and sub-groups, as if they were animal or plant species to be divided in phylums and species. Marcelo Sanz created one of the most detailed of these and his will be used as a model. To start with, Sanz posited three greater orders within sport-- land, sea, and air-- although he admitted that some, like skiing and ice skating that take place on land and frozen water, straddled those categories. He also recognized that land sports were by far the most important and popular for obvious reasons.⁶⁵ Sanz defined groups and subgroups separated by their use of various machines and animals. Use of animals, therefore, defined one group that included the various forms of horse racing, animal hunting, and bullfighting. The use of weapons marked one of the most important groups because of its obvious utility and it was divided into firearms and traditional weapons.

The most important of these groups were those that involved direct competition either through head-to-head competition or through striving to do something faster or longer. This sort of competition drew the most direct connections to classical Greek athletics (and in some cases were classical sports) and as a result held the most prestige. Competition-oriented sports were also divided clearly into two groups. The first were individual duals such as Greco-roman wresting and ju-jitsu, and epitomized by boxing, the purest gladiatorial contest. The second was team competition in which football was always the first and frequently the only sport mentioned. After this general organization Sanz broke down into an impressively in depth analysis of a wide range of sports that

⁶⁵ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 33-36.

were all placed in their appropriate category.⁶⁶ In this case, however, we will only discuss the two most popular and important, cycling and football.

As noted last chapter, the most popular early sport was cycling. As late as 1913 Sanz could write that “El ciclismo, como el *foot-ball*, son los dos grandes deportes que preocupan á la mayoría de la juventud; casi puede decirse que son los únicos que se practican, ó, por lo menos, son los más populares.”⁶⁷ It was recognized that the introduction of cycling opened up a new age in sport, with races appearing all over Europe in the late 1890s. However, cycling was identified as the leading edge of commercialization in sports with velodromes turning into sites of mass entertainment and cycling enthusiasts becoming professional racers. Importantly, competition was attacked because of the ways in which it detracted from the physical benefits of cycling. Sanz attacked the very “ugliness” of the physical position that a competitive bicyclist fit himself into. The bicyclist rode with “el espinazo encorvada sobre sí mismo; las piernas desnudas, luciendo las vellosidades y agitándolas desesperadamente; los brazos delgados y apoyadas las manos sobre el guía, que es bajo porque los fabricantes han sacrificado la higiene á la velocidad.”⁶⁸ Nonetheless, it had to be recognized that cycling brought sports to the masses like nothing else prior to 1910. The proliferation of cycling clubs discussed last chapter make it clear that without the enthusiasm for

⁶⁶ Sanz dedicated chapters to mountain climbing, skiing, sledding, footraces, cycling, cricket, fencing, football, and riding in this early book. Given the topic, I have limited my discussion of them to football and cycling, but all of the chapters have merit for understanding the ideas and approach of early proponents of athletics in Spain.

⁶⁷ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 75.

⁶⁸ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 77.

cycling the sporting community would have had far less popular support.

As the fastest growing sport in the nation, football naturally received a significant amount of attention and analysis as well. The sport generally lauded for its cardiovascular benefits and clear development of the lower body. It also drew positive reviews because of its team aspect and the collective goals it could instill in youths, thus developing the mind and body in one activity. Many, however, were cautious because football did very little for the upper body and tended to dominate all of an individual's athletic activity. Also similar to cycling, everyone was extremely wary of football growing role as a mass activity that threatened the pedagogical ideals of the proponents of sport.

Marcelo Sanz dedicated a ten-page chapter to football in his 1913 book on sport and hygiene, more than any other athletic activity except for cycling. Sanz endorsed the sport, but cautiously agreed that “los chicos pueden jugarlo, pero sin exceso, y alternando con otros ejercicios donde actúen los brazos.”⁶⁹ He validated this scientifically, looking at the specific muscles left unused when participating in a football match. “...los músculos del tórax trabajan poco y los de los brazos nada, porque estos segmentos están en actitud de caídos, constantemente cuelga de los hombros.” In fact, even outright supporters of sport, like Emilio Porras, recognized that football only really provided physical development for the lower body.⁷⁰ Sanz described the results of such regular activity as a narrow chest, a pumped up back, and

⁶⁹ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 113-114.

⁷⁰ Porras, *Educación física*, 14.

fallen shoulders representing imbalance even in the upper body.

Another danger sports promoters recognized were the frequent crashes and resulting injuries that resulted from competitive football. Challenges for the ball produced injuries to the ankles, legs, and knees while fighting for position. Sanz also warned that when competition was fierce and the rules of the game either forgotten or not strictly enforced, hard landings became dangerous because of their potential to cause stomach, spinal and internal injuries.⁷¹ In fact, he spent several pages discussing the various forms of athletic injuries from the period's most advanced studies on the topic. Sanz cited one study done by a Mr. Elliot, a Harvard professor, which reported 20 or 30 percent of American football players experienced broken collarbones, dislocated arms, or other such serious injuries. He also noted that the study reported that of a club of 85 players in one year, 54 of those players experienced some significant break, contusion, or muscle strain. This American study was of American football, not soccer, and Sanz did endorse soccer over the American version; he even noted another American study by a Mr. Rachou that attributed 13 deaths in one year to American football, putting it on a level with bullfighting for fatalities. Nonetheless, the fact that he cited these American studies emphasized his worry over injury, the depth he went to for supporting details, and his international perspective.

Sanz continued by detailing the injuries that had been logged as possible results in England of both association and rugby football to make his point absolutely clear.

⁷¹ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 116-120.

First he discussed minor injuries including scrapes and bumps to the face and head and the almost regular broken noses. Lower on the body, he was again sensitive to collarbone injuries and also the fracturing of forearms and hands in falls. More seriously, there was the possibility of thorax and spinal injuries and then of pelvis and a variety of leg injuries as well. The point of this extensive list of dangers was to temper his endorsement of the sport and other writers made similar points. Dr. Bastos cited football as the cause of around thirty percent of all sports injuries. He even admitted that it was rare for a match to end without at least one player rolling around in pain after crashing into someone else.⁷² But he followed this by pointing out that football players represented around seventy percent of the nation's athletes, making the point that football actually produced a small number of injuries per capita and that they were usually minor injuries at that.

Nonetheless, Bastos recognized positive results from football, as well. One of his first comments was to recognize the cardiovascular benefits of the sport. Sanz even placed it above cycling on the grounds that the standing position is better for working the lungs than the seated one and Emilio Porras recognized the development of the lungs and pectoral muscles it produced as well. In a chart that he developed ranking all the contemporary sports for their hygienic value, Porras listed football as being good for the *respiratorio*, *circulatorio*, and *psicomotor* although incomplete for muscular

⁷² Bastos, *Dos charlas sobre deportes*, 30-31.

development of the body.⁷³

More than any other benefit, though, the different writers recognized the popularity the sport had gained as a form of collective combat particularly suited to schools, academies, societies, and business offices. Sanz argued that in schools football took the most troublesome boys and by virtue of its rules transformed them into well-behaved young men. Sanz was quite aware of English sources supporting the benefits of team play in football. He agreed that the sport had “incomparable” moral value and quoted Herbert Spencer’s suggestion that “soccer societies fought as a unit, strongly united by one idea.” The discipline of a football team united many as one in a special form of work. Sanz used the metaphor of football as a moral organism in this wonderfully poetic quote:

[El equipo] que nace, se desenvuelve, vive, prospera y triunfa, por la acción de todos, y no puede subsistir sin la disciplina; necesita un jefe verdadero y único, cuya autoridad no sólo es externa, sino que es interna, y forma parte del ser, constituye una unidad moral, por lo que es precisamente el aspecto más importante de la organización de un equipo, el aspecto interno es la acción moral que penetra hasta lo íntimo de los sentimientos, cautiva el corazón, subordina la voluntad y domina los instintos egoístas.⁷⁴

This embodies what Sanz and most advocates saw as the positives of sport and football in particular. At the same time, Sanz also expresses his conservative strain of regeneration and military background in the quote. The idea of needing “a true leader” with complete authority to bring change echoed Joaquín Costa’s final call for an “iron surgeon.” That call would be taken up in 1923 by General Primo de Rivera, who saw

⁷³ Porras, *Educación física*, 20.

⁷⁴ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 115.

his dictatorship as the strong hand that could bring progress to Spain. That sort of militaristic idea of disciplined unity also echoed the desire to turn individualistic Spaniards into part of a team and subordinate their egos for the greater good of all. Porras saw these lessons as particularly important because individuality and hot-temperedness was supposed to be natural to the Spanish character. He wrote that “el fútbol, se decía, es juego de conjunto de armonía, de esfuerzos, y los españoles somos individualistas y queremos lograr triunfos personales, con en el célebre cuento de la cucaña en que un español tiraba de los pies al compatriota que iba a alcanzar el premio.”⁷⁵ For a nation looking everywhere for regeneration and rapidly developing class organizations that all preached solidarity, this lesson was almost magnetic. Especially in the form of a game that taught the lesson to youths and set a pattern for later life, football could hardly fail to resonate with every section of Spanish society even if their goals were drastically different. In the end, Sanz and most writers saw football as a positive benefit to those who played it. While injuries and professionalism were fears, the sport’s team benefits and the fact that it occurred outside under the sun and in the fresh air were seen as more important than all its negatives.

Women and Athletics

While clearly not the movement’s central focus, it is also important to recognize the roles designated for women within the growing athletic community. As can be

⁷⁵ Porras, *Educación física*, 32.

expected, most proponents of physical education tiptoed delicately around the topic because of the dominance of conservative tradition and gender roles within Catholic Spanish society. These traditions limited the active roles women could take within society and the amount of education they could acceptably aspire to. Traditional Catholic mores defined how women were expected to dress and act in public, and accordingly stopped women from participating in any activity that was not “ladylike.” For example, any sport that was too physically demanding or strength-based, women were not supposed to participate in, while more genteel sports, such as tennis, were acceptable. Even when they were allowed to participate in sports such as tennis, women in Spain, as in the rest of Europe, generally had to wear long skirts and dresses and other ungainly, covering clothing to protect their modesty. Because of the strength of Catholic tradition, these general European rules proved harder to defy in Spain than other European nations like Great Britain and France. In fact, most Spanish writers still saw the goal of female education as producing the “perfect marriage” and ignored the physical education of women entirely.

The conservative approach looked back to the ancient Greeks and saw sport as a generator of gender roles within all communities that cast men as competitors and women as observers. Marcelo Sanz, for example, defined the games of boys as *deportes incipientes* that copied and developed the ideas of war and combat and implanted them in young boys. He then compared this desire for games in young boys to the preference in young girls for “muñecas, los cuidados de la casa y los *trapitos*,

que se representan la coquetería de mañana....”⁷⁶ Sanz particularly attacked the participation of women in cycling as totally unbecoming of their gender. He amusingly described a woman riding a bike in a short skirt as the ugliest means of transportation imaginable. The attack continued that cycling would deform the proportions of beauty and harmony and warned that such changes in physique could be accompanied by differences in their sexual lives as well.⁷⁷ By their usual exclusion from incipient sports (i.e. childhood games), therefore, women’s roles were reaffirmed by the masculine elite almost unconsciously.

Similarly, the Spanish doctor and philosopher, Gregorio Marañón, elaborated on the role of sport in establishing gender roles and argued that women should, therefore, be kept away from them. Marañón claimed that gender roles resulted from the two sexes’ different physiques. He asserted that men were more muscular and had nervous systems that provided stability and strength, while women were built for maternity. Marañón recognized that modern women did participate in athletics, and portrayed a stereotype of women athletes having short hair, wearing different clothing and being sexually ambiguous. He claimed that, after becoming pregnant, “entonces la feminidad verdadera se impone y la mujer deja sus hábitos deportistas, que son tan varoniles en el sentido de la actividad como en el de la indumentaria.”⁷⁸ Marañón’s argument, then, was essentially that athletic women took on masculine characteristics that were not

⁷⁶ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 23-4.

⁷⁷ Sanz, *Ensayo*, 85-87.

⁷⁸ Gregorio Marañón, *La acción como carácter sexual* (Madrid: Caro Raggíó, 1925), 66-67.

appropriate to their gender, in his opinion.

In his view, it was appropriate, however, for women to be spectators at sporting events. Essentially, Marañón saw sport as a substitute activity or extension for men who did not have to work and sport was, therefore, inherently masculine. This also meant that, for Marañón, sport was inherently an activity for the middle-classes and elite who no longer physically exerted themselves at work. Pure sportsmen, therefore, used athletics to avoid “physical degeneration” and to not be left out of the “sexual battle.” Through competition male athletes distinguished themselves as stronger and as more powerful than other men- and women watched because of the desire this created in them.

La mujer que nos pinta Ovidio siguiendo con ojos anhelantes y con el corazón encendido las proezas de los atletas de circo, es la misma que hoy acude a las olimpiadas modernas a cumplir, sin saberlo, la ley fisiológica de pagar el esfuerzo varonil con el amor. Y, en suma, es el trasunto de la hembra del ciervo, que espera que riñan los machos, para ser poseída por el más fuerte.⁷⁹

In this view, the “natural” role for women was to be the prize that men fought over in a very primal and animalistic sense. Dr. Bastos supported both sides of this discussion in extremely similar words. He claimed that “la actividad deportiva, como remedo que es de la acción y de la lucha, corresponde fundamentalmente al hombre, así como a la mujer le conviene esencialmente el papel de espectadora.”⁸⁰ Bastos even quoted Marañón to support his argument and commented on the strangeness of the fact that despite their logic, the vast majority of spectators at sporting events were men.

⁷⁹ Marañón, *La acción*, 65.

⁸⁰ Bastos, *Dos charlas sobre deportes*, 19-20.

Regardless of our modern opinions, such views were not uncommon in Spain at the time, even among educated men like Marañón and Bastos. It explained why most writers felt women should not participate in sport and also why conservative thinkers (as well as liberal ones) could accept the development of athletics. By dividing the masculine athlete from the feminine crowd, sport could be categorized as a modern hand-me-down from primal forms of combat. This allowed it to be used to reinforce the existing gender roles, despite being a new activity, at least for the conservative element.

Liberal thinkers, however, at least belatedly included women and their physical education in the arguments for education reform. The most important arguments in favor of female physical education came from two leading feminist writers, Berta Wilheim de Dávila and Concepción Arenal. Wilheim de Dávila argued directly that the physical inferiority that conservative writers used to argue that women were not suited for physical training was itself the result of generations of neglect. “Si la mujer dispone de tanta menor fuerza muscular, es porque sobre ella pesa la herencia de muchos siglos en que apartadas de ciertos ejercicios, peor alimentada a veces que el hombre y frecuentemente reducida al hogar fueron todos de sus músculos degenerados.”⁸¹ Concha Arenal focused on the hypocrisy of writers that decried the degeneration of the race without recognizing the role women played as the mothers within society. “Con la inacción física e intelectual se quiere tener buenos madres...[la mujer] llega a ser madre de hijos más débiles que ella, sus nietos lo serán aun más todavía y la degeneración es

⁸¹ Berta Wilheim de Dávila, “Aptitud de la mujer para todas las profesiones,” *BILE* 17 (1893): 193.

indefectible y visible para cualquiera que observa.”⁸² This argument fit cleanly into the idea of racial development and the acceptance that developed traits could be passed on. If the race was degenerating, it would seem logical that the first focus of regenerationists would be the mothers of the nation who could hardly produce strong children if they themselves were weak.

This argument was included within the dialogue of athletic reform by a few writers who supported female participation with the purpose of making women as strong and capable as possible. The foremost of these was Emilio Porras, who saw benefits in creating stronger and more physically capable women. He argued that “la mujer necesita ser fuerte; tonificar sus pulmones, que es llevar esa tonificación a todo su organismo;...necesita responde al ideal de belleza que resplandece en la estafaría griega y acordar la moda con sus futuras necesidades biológicas.”⁸³ Porras wanted to blend physical fitness and the ideal of women to produce new well-rounded women. Even he, however, placed limits on what it was acceptable for women to participate in. Contact sports were still prohibited for women, and sports that increased a lady’s grace were emphasized. Porras listed the best athletic activities for the double goal of women’s hygiene and beauty as dancing or the gymnastic exercises of Dalcroze.⁸⁴ Nonetheless, even that much liberality mostly fell on deaf ears. While the ILE and other institutions were willing to introduce limited participation for girls in school, such opportunities

⁸² Concepción Arenal, “La educación de la mujer,” *BILE* 16 (1892): 312.

⁸³ Porras, *Educación física*, 27.

⁸⁴ Porras, *Educación física*, 29.

would remain strictly limited over the years. Gradually the reality of female participation improved over the decades, but it would be a long process. With victory of Francisco Franco and the conservative Nationalist side in the Spanish Civil War, traditional Catholic mores and gender roles received new life in the 1940s and 1950s and the roles women were allowed to play remained restricted until the 1970s.

Chapter Three:

The Introduction of Football to Spain and the Age of Camaraderie

By 1900, sporting communities had developed all over Spain and especially in its major cities. Barcelona, Bilbao, and Madrid all had gymnasiums that served as centers for local athletes and all three had branches of the Federación Gymnástica Española that worked to raise awareness and participation among middle-class Spaniards. These athletic forays developed out of the desire to rejuvenate the nation and race and return Spain to a position of importance in the world. What they succeeded at most, however, was preparing the ground for the introduction of football. The early athletic communities served as incubators for sport and, in particular, the fastest growing international sport-- football. These early communities provided Spaniards interested in physical self-improvement for the good of the patria with the resources to connect with foreigners who taught them the sports important in the rest of Europe. The introduction of football into Spain needed these connections between foreign businessmen and athletically inclined Spaniards through which football was introduced to Spain.

Wherever such foreigners and Spaniards came in to regular contact, foreign nationals began teaching football to anyone they could get to play with them. The

motives of the foreigners were usually as simple as filling out a side and the basic enjoyment of playing the sport. Fostering athletics for the reasons Spaniards did was never an intentional goal on the foreigners' part, it was simply a natural pursuit based on their education in the public schools of Great Britain or the gymnastic societies of France and Switzerland. Spaniards, however, were attracted to football for a variety of reasons. First, it fit the hygienic goals of the athletic movement for physical regeneration. Second, football provided a form of conspicuous consumption through which the middle classes could mark themselves out in Spanish society, a goal amplified by football's Britishness that brought extra cultural prestige. Lastly, there was the simple enjoyment of the game because competition spurs pride among friends, brotherhood among teammates, and, as most athletes would agree, the basic happiness of physical health.

Football was introduced to Spain in four main geographical areas where it became popular in the late 1890s and early 1900s. The sport came first to the port town of Huelva in southern Spain as a result of the purchase by a British conglomerate of the Río Tinto copper mines for which Huelva was the port. Similarly, economic ties led to football becoming a common activity in Bilbao, where the regular shipping connections between the Basque iron and steel industry and British traders brought the two sides into regular contact. Third, football developed in Barcelona because the city's economic vitality produced a strong early sporting community and football became a marker of the emerging differences between the pro-Catalan and pro-Madrid section of

the industrial bourgeoisie. Finally, Madrid joined the Spanish football world with its introduction coming from the intellectual elite surrounding the ILE and a significant Basque community that developed their own sporting community in the capital.

During the first decade of the twentieth century, all of these areas developed not just one or two main teams, but collections of clubs that evolved local rivalries and public identities of their own. These clubs were essentially lower-middle and middle-middle class institutions economically in which every member could and did play. However, frequently they had a higher social status than their income alone provided them because of connections with the educational elite or foreigners who brought prestige. All of them had inclinations towards “Europeanization” and *regenerationismo* that they saw their involvement with football as furthering. Also in this early period, the first local football federations appeared and were followed by a national federation that strove to unify and organize clubs across the country. The first national competition, the Copa del Rey, began in 1902 and has since become a permanent part of Spanish life. To survive financially, these early clubs built up support and interest by forging identities and this meant negotiating those identities, to balance football’s foreign nature, vocabulary, and frequently club founders with a hispanization that made the sport acceptable to Spaniards. Quite simply, early football clubs had to establish that they were Spanish and invent identities that could draw support and sympathy from the greater population.

Finally, clubs everywhere had to abide by the 1887 Ley de Asociaciones. This law was passed by Sagasta's Liberal government to insure the right of unions and political parties to exist as legal entities in Spain, without persecution. It required that an association establish a constitution, submit it to the regional civil authorities, and receive official permission to function. As long as football clubs remained informal groups of friends this was not necessary, such as the early organization, Foot-Ball Sky, in Madrid, which functioned throughout the 1890s without legally registering. However, as football clubs began to charge monthly fees, accrued significant assets, and developed a public identity, it became important for them to gain official government recognition to protect themselves legally. Registration even became a mark of social prestige, because it provided an official date of foundation that every society trumpeted proudly and denoted government approval of their society that the middle-class participants highly valued.

By the end of the decade, football reached its first point of transition. Small athletic newspapers had been established and results and scores were often reported in the main newspapers of each city, but most sports "newspapers" were more club newsletters than broadsheets for the general public. Many new clubs had established grounds to play on, but all but the richest teams shared those fields with one another and only rarely had the funds to purchase land of their own. Clubs were only beginning to collect a significant income from attendance at matches and players usually paid their own way for equipment, travel, accommodations, and everything that was a part of the

sport. Essentially, these were just groups of well-off friends doing something they enjoyed. Most *socios* (club members) expected to play and members of the working classes were few and far between on the pitch. While the level of the game was still primitive, many of the owners and presidents who later dominated the sport came out of this first generation of socio-players. Men like Hans Gamper who founded and played with F.C. Barcelona and later became its president for fifteen years until 1925 and José Angel Berraondo who learned the sport in Britain, played for Madrid F.C. and returned to the city of his childhood to help run Real Sociedad de San Sebastián for much of the 1910s and 1920s. Even Santiago Bernabeu, the great president of Real Madrid, began as a player with his brothers at the end of the first decade of the century. This pattern was repeated over and over and makes this early age of camaraderie a critical formative period, inspired by the pedagogical motives of the athletic movement and consisting of young men who later went on to become prominent members of the football world.

Huelva: A Foreign Economic Enclave

As any Spanish football enthusiast can tell you, the first football club established in Spain was Recreativo de Huelva. Located in the backward region of southwestern Spain, on the surface Huelva was a most unlikely location for a modern European sport's first introduction to the country. Huelva is a small port town at the mouth of the Tinto River in Extremadura, near the border with Portugal, and down the coast from its big neighbor Cádiz. Because of its small size, Huelva never developed beyond a

regionally important athletic community. Nonetheless, this quiet port town was the first area of Spain where people played football. Huelva's experience provides an excellent example of economic development initiating profound cultural change. It is also important to recognize that the cultural change in Huelva resulted specifically from an isolated foreign enclave. Economic historians have frequently derided enclave development as one-sided exploitation of a poorer country's resources that brought little development to the host nation's own industrial capability. Economically, this argument is quite correct. However, by refocusing our attention onto cultural changes, it quickly becomes clear that economic enclaves can produce profound cultural developments.

In 1872, a conglomeration of British mining firms purchased a long-term lease from the Spanish government for exclusive rights to the Río Tinto copper mines. The Río Tinto mines held some of the most valuable copper deposits in Europe and were a valuable commodity for the expanding industrial economies of Western Europe that needed copper for telegraph wires that British companies dominated.¹ The new Río Tinto Corporation immediately began moving British engineers and company managers into the area, who brought their own ideas about the correct way to work, live, and spend their leisure time with them, including playing football in their spare time. The influx of British workers occurred not only in the area around the mines themselves, but

¹ Several good economic histories of Spain that touch on the Río Tinto Mines are Jaime Vicens Vives, *An Economic History of Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); Joseph Harrison, *An Economic History of Modern Spain* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1978); Gabriel Tortella, *El desarrollo de la España contemporánea: historia económica de los siglos XIX y XX* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1994).

also in the town of Huelva-- the port where Río Tinto copper was transferred to oceangoing ships. This meant that significant numbers of British company employees moved both to Huelva and to the mines themselves and there were also periodic visits from ships filled with British sailors looking for recreation during their short time ashore.

Soon the newly arrived company men began importing equipment for their recreation, including football shoes, uniforms, knee pads, and gloves and they began organizing teams to play football and cricket on their days off from work. By the 1880s, employees had begun organizing games between the British miners, engineers, and the sailors from visiting ships. When they needed more players they invited local Spaniards who worked for the company join them. These games provided the British with something familiar in a strange land and built morale and communication between foreigners and locals at the mines. Everyone interested could play and the British bosses and engineers increasingly played alongside Spanish mine workers, establishing contact outside of the workplace in a much freer atmosphere.²

After years of such informal development, in 1889 Dr. Alexander Mackay (a doctor attached to the Río Tinto company) suggested that these new groups legalize themselves and organize a club officially recognized by the Spanish government. By

² J. González Pérez, *Historia del fútbol en Huelva y su provincia* (1930; Reprint, Huelva: Delegación Provincial de Cultura de la Junta de Andalucía, 1999), 14-15. This book is a wonderful resource for the history of football in Huelva. It was originally published in 1930 and gives a perspective on development from a writer who personally knew many of the clubs and individuals he wrote about. It has the usual faults of a "sports history" such as glorification of victories and trophies, but provides useful information and a picture of how the teams developed. The provincial government of Andalucía should be congratulated for reprinting such a lost treasure.

registering, the new club guaranteed its legal right to exist and showed its willingness to follow the Spanish government's laws, which was important for a society consisting largely of British nationals. Mackay and his friends held a meeting at the Hotel C3lon in Huelva organized by the Don Guillermo Sundheim de la Cueva on December 23, 1889, where they established their first board of directors for Huelva Recreation Club. The names of the directors starkly reveal the mixed nature of the endeavor. On one hand, founders like the executive president Pedro N. de Soto and a board member named Mu1oz were Spaniards connected to the company. On the other hand, club secretary Edward Palin and members Lawson and Dr. Mackay himself were British members who initially represented most of the membership, a fact driven home by the two English words used in the original society's name.³ The local civil governor officially recognized the new society in early 1890, and the first Spanish football club was established.

Of course, the development of the club did not stop there and the activity of the Huelva Recreation Club expanded over the course of the 1890s. Almost immediately Huelva R.C. made its first trip, going to Seville to play a team of Englishmen in that city in 1890.⁴ Even in the few months after its foundation, the club picked up more Spanish players affiliated with the mines (mostly white-collar workers, a few engineers, and a few actual miners) in an attempt to fit into the local social landscape, and the

³ A full list of first directors of Recreativo de Huelva is; Honorary President: Carlos Adam, Executive President: Pedro N. de Soto, Secretary: Edward Palin, Treasurer: A. Goug, Vocals: William Sundheim, Ernest Croft, Lindeman, Lawson, Speirs, Mu1oz, and Dr. Mackay. *Real Federaci3n Espa1ola de F1tbol: 1913-1988* (Madrid: RFEF, 1988), 19.

⁴ Gonz1lez, *Huelva*, 24-27.

Seville match featured players named Pepe García, Manolo Almansa, and Pepe Carbonell in the lineup. Soon the British team in Seville returned the favor and visited Huelva and one of the first Spanish football rivalries had begun, adding a regional identity to the Huelvan club through competition with outsiders. Huelva R.C. continued under the direction of Dr. Mackay throughout the 1890s. By 1903, however, football clubs were appearing all over Spain and to assert that the Huelvan club was Spanish, not British, it went through a period of conscious hispanization.⁵ In 1903 and with support from the provincial governor-general, Alejandro Cadarso, the board of directors was changed and Spaniards took over all the key positions. The club also reregistered with the provincial government and changed the society's name to Recreativo de Huelva, graphically representing the new Spanish focus. These changes raised the question of identity for the first time and represented one of the first direct attempts to assert a Spanish identity to make the sport more palatable to locals. Nonetheless, foreigners continued to participate in each club for decades afterwards, but they ceased to be the organization's face. The early Spanish football clubs dealt with this legacy of playing a foreign sport in clubs originally dominated, in most cases, by the foreigners themselves. While this battle was fought out most dramatically in Barcelona, the goal of asserting a club's "Spanishness" went on almost everywhere football was introduced and began in Huelva with the first club in the country.

⁵ González, *Huelva*, 29-31.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, Recreativo de Huelva had developed into a recognized representative of the region, although it would never grow to be more than that. In 1906, Recreativo sent its first team to play in the national cup championship and was the first team to represent an area other than Barcelona, Madrid, or the Basque Country. The team they sent was a fully Spanish side and represented southwestern Andalucía for the entire nation to see. Three years later in 1909, they triumphed in one of the first regional championships of Andalucía and Extremadura and brought home a silver cup donated by Dr. Mackay to the winner that still sits in the club's trophy case today. The same year also brought Recreativo recognition of a different kind: royal recognition. King Alfonso XIII granted the club one of the first royal titles given to a sports club (making the official name Real Recreativo de Huelva). The king even declared himself the "first sportsman of Spain" to give weight to the title. This brought legitimacy and pride to the athletic endeavors of Huelva and turned what was originally a simple game into something that puffed out the chests of many Extremadurans. The development of this new Andalusian identity for the club mirrored the advent of Andalusian regionalism over the first two decades of the twentieth century. Flamenco went through a revival during the period, and an idealized version of Andalucía was created that became a popular trope in Spanish literature, which distracted attention from the region's serious agrarian problems. In 1909, a new movement supporting political and cultural Andalusian regionalism developed under the leadership of the lawyer Blas Infante. Over the subsequent eight

years, Infante developed the Junta Liberalista Andalucía, organized the Ronda Conference of 1918, and helped create a flag, anthem, and other symbols to represent the region. Within this context, the rise of Recreativo de Huelva, and later the two important Sevillian clubs (Seville F.C. and Real Betis Balompié), served as rallying points for this new regional identity and the local tournament helped spur the common cause.

Despite its fame as “Spain’s first football club,” Recreativo was by no means the only team in the region that developed during the early period of informal organization over the 1890s and early 1900s. By the 1890s, there were a variety of teams in the area that competed on a regular basis. The region boasted as many as twenty-one fully-equipped clubs, although most were only informal and never recognized by the civil authorities. More than anyone else, the Río Tinto Company made this possible by dedicating resources and land at their disposal to athletic endeavors. They built seven football fields in the area from Huelva to the Río Tinto mines, including fields at Atalaya, Dehesa, Naya, Nerva, Valle, and Río Tinto itself.⁶ A variety of different groups used these fields. Some were general societies that maintained substantial support and interest like Valle F.C., Galicia F.C., and Nerva F.C.. Other teams were specifically youth-oriented and almost every pitch supported an Infantil Escolar or youth team. Finally, a few specifically English teams existed, as well. These were usually called “Equipo Inglés,” but there was also the Río Tinto Foot-Ball Club.

⁶ González, *Huelva*, 15.

Of these clubs, several are worth noting because they represent the complexity of the different social groups that developed. As mentioned above, Río Tinto F.C. was established at the mines themselves and was dominated by British players until at least 1910. At the other extreme was Onuba Balompié. This was the most “Spanish” team in the area and provides one of the first examples of Spanish pride in the football world by naming their team “balompié” (literally “ball-foot” in Spanish), instead of the English word “football.” Such sensitivity over the use of English words was a prime battleground for club identities over the subsequent decades and Onuba provides the earliest example of a club adopting the Spanish translation. It is also significant that the use of *balompié* first appears in the predominantly rural, conservative, southwestern corner of Spain. Traditional, Catholic values were strong in the region among the middle classes and elite, so it was natural for them to place a greater emphasis on hispanizing football there.

Football was not the only athletic activity that the Río Tinto Company brought to the region. In fact, over the last two decades of the nineteenth century the company built a substantial infrastructure for a variety of sports in Huelva and around the Río Tinto mines. It built tennis courts, golf courses, and cricket fields all over the area on unused land. Overall in the province, they established eight soccer pitches, seven tennis courts, two golf courses, and one cricket field by 1890, all of which could be used by locals with the right connections. In fact, the original founders of Huelva Recreation Club alternated between playing football and cricket for years before football came to

dominate their activities. Beyond this, the Río Tinto Company granted the “Spanish” team Onuba Balompié fields between the railroad and a road in town in the late 1880s. They used this land to build a football field and *polideportivo* for general athletics as well as a race track for bicycles, which was one of the first in Spain. The opening of the new velodrome on August 20, 1892, drew Queen Maria Cristina and her young son, the future Alfonso XIII, to celebrate the event.⁷ This was the first point of contact between the athletic movement and Alfonso who regularly supported athletics in his majority by granting royal titles to teams across the country (including Recreativo de Huelva itself). The best example of this was his support for the national football tournament held in honor of his coronation in 1902 and subsequently named the Copa del Rey.

Athletic enthusiasts supported by the mines, also established a Spanish Tropa de Exploradores in Río Tinto. The Tropa eventually included two hundred and five *exploradores* and seventy-two scouts who were well “instruidos y equipados, y a los cuales facilita cada año uniformes y botas nuevos, así como todo el material necesario para sus exploraciones.”⁸ The Tropa was organized along the lines of the boy-scouts and taught male youths a variety of outdoor activities and self-discipline; essentially it was a variation of Baden-Powell’s international Boy-Scout movement. The project drew the encouragement of the Ayuntamiento and later of General Primo de Rivera, who visited the region in the 1920s and specifically praised the Exploradores as a progressive step forward.

⁷ González, *Huelva*, 28.

⁸ González, *Huelva*, 17.

All of these developments demonstrate the establishment of an early athletic community around Río Tinto and Huelva. They resulted directly from changes and interests brought to the region by the British managers and engineers of the Río Tinto Company and represent the process of cultural exchange and diffusion at work. Most discussions of the mines in Spanish historiography denounce their existence as a classic example of enclave industrialization by a foreign power that had little or no connection and effect on the countryside around it. Economically, this is true, but social and cultural changes almost always result from two citizens of different nationalities regularly spending time with one another. The introduction of football was one of those changes. It brought an otherwise backwards region of Spain into the cultural forefront and provided its people with something to be proud of for over a century. Nonetheless, the early developments in Huelva would soon be overshadowed once the citizens of the heavyweight Spanish cities, Barcelona, Bilbao, and Madrid, dove into the rising international sport.

Bilbao: Shipping and Education

One of the first areas where football developed on a large scale was in Bilbao, the industrial city on Spain's north-central coast. The capital city of the Basque Country was the second most industrialized city in Spain and the center of the iron and coal industries that stretched throughout Asturias and the Basque Country. Like Huelva, this industry had connections outside of Spain and it provided the country's

strongest international economic tie. In the late 19th century, coal mining and iron production along the northern coast had grown dramatically and become part of the western European shipping routes and trade networks. As a result, only Barcelona, where trade also played a key role in football's introduction, was more integrated into Europe's economy than Bilbao, which had strong ties to Great Britain, the main purchaser of Spanish iron and coal. In particular, strong trade lines developed between Asturias/the Basque Country and industrial northern England where the British demand for coal was highest. Such connections were so strong that shipping prices were generally cheaper between Asturias or Bilbao and Liverpool than between each other because of all the coal carrying ships. As a result of these strong economic ties, foreigners played a more important role in the development of football in Bilbao than anywhere else except Huelva. There were regular groups of British citizens that became part of Bilbao's society, and conversely many Basques experienced life in Britain. This led the Basque professional and industrial middle classes of engineers and bankers to emulate their British business partners and gave football significant social prestige that drove its adoption within the city.

The expanding iron and steel industry and the trade ties it produced created two points of cultural contact between Britain and Northern Spain. First, the developing industries (not just coal and iron, but banking thrived as well) gradually produced a solid middle-class within Basque society. These middle-class families had the same goals of passing on a higher social standing to their children as their peers everywhere

else in the world and pursued similar strategies of social climbing. Specifically, many Basque parents sent their sons to Britain for their secondary education. In the United Kingdom, these Basque youths studied engineering and learned English, a valuable skill in international business. Young Basque boys usually attended schools around Manchester where the trade routes took them and where several Catholic public schools happily accommodated their Spanish Catholic brethren-- and of course their parent's money. While in British schools, the Basque students absorbed the ideals of muscular Christianity and learned to play the sports that even the Catholic British prep schools promoted.⁹ This connection was particularly strong because while many British public schools preferred cricket, rugby, or their own brand of football, Catholic British schools like Stonyhurst primarily played association-style football (soccer). When the Basque students completed their studies, they brought their enthusiasm for football back to Spain and provided the core for Bilbao's first football clubs.

The second point of contact between the coal and iron industry produced in Bilbao was through the trade connections themselves. With regular shipments of coal and iron ore shipping out of Bilbao, the sight of British sailors on leave and the existence of a small British community in the city became more and more common. Quite simply, British sailors played the game whenever they were in port and over time groups of Spaniards began to emulate and compete with them. Soon British sailors,

⁹ J.A. Mangan discussed the comparative level of interest in sport that developed at Catholic, British public schools as well as their Protestant brethren in his work J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in the Victorian and Edwardian Public School: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981).

Basque students, and engineers from both countries were playing football with one another on fields around the port on the weekends. Though smaller than the foreign colony in Barcelona, British engineers from the smelting companies and employees of the direct telegraph cable between Bilbao and Cornwall completed in 1874 all joined in these games. As the 1890s progressed, more and more Spaniards informally learned the game from the mix of Englishmen and Scotsmen living in the city, the more experienced players served as referees for games, and the level of play rose.

This mixed collection of football enthusiasts held the first official match in Bilbao in the spring of 1894. The spur for this game was a challenge from the local Spanish/Basque players issued to the British community of the city in the important local newspaper *El Noticiero Bilbaína*.¹⁰ Within two days, the British community took up the glove and the match was arranged for 10:30 on the morning of May 3. The British easily won the match, but the Basques had started to compete. Over the following years, players from both sides continued to play regularly at a small field next to the Lamiaco Electric Factory that became the first football pitch in the city. This field was located in close proximity to the great ironworks, Los Altos Hornos, that was partially owned by a Liverpool-based consortium of Basque bankers, placing Bilbao's first football pitch at the center of the Basque steel industry. This graphically illustrates

¹⁰ José Maria Mateos, *Los cincuenta años de Atlético de Bilbao 1898-1948* (Bilbao: Talleres Escuelas J. de P. de Menores, 1948), 3. Although officially just a club history of Athletic de Bilbao this is a wonderful book with many useful insights into the development of the club. This is because the author, José Maria Mateos, was one of the first serious football journalists in Spain. By the 1910s, he was a nationally recognized figure who participated in charity events along with the first football stars and bullfighters. Mateos's history of Athletic is largely written from his personal experience and is a unique primary source.

the connection between the city's industrial growth and the athletic development and connects it to the Bilbao businessmen.

It took a few years, however, for teams to be established in Bilbao. Although never officially incorporated, the first informal club was named Astorkia and started play in 1896, but formal development had to wait until 1898. In that year two clubs were established from different sources. The first consisted largely of the Lamiaco field players and took the particularly British name Athletic Club. The second group consisted largely of sons of well-known families in the city who had begun to play at fields off of the Paseo de Zugatzarte in a solid middle class neighborhood. This second group formally established itself in 1900 and took the slightly less British name Bilbao Foot-Ball Club (at least they included Bilbao in the name).¹¹ The leaders of the second club were three brothers, Carlos, Francisco, and Manuel Castellanos Jacquet. Francisco Castellanos had learned the sport while studying in England and brought back one of the first official leather footballs and pairs of football boots to Bilbao when he returned, while his brother Carlos became president of the new club. Importantly, the local athletic community already established in the city with its gymnasiums, cycling societies, and an important FGE branch joined in to support the second of these early football clubs. In particular, the largest gymnastic society in the city, Gimnasio Zamacois, threw its support behind Bilbao Foot-Ball Club. Football had been played informally by Zamacois members as early as 1898 and they chose to embrace the new

¹¹ Joaquín Soto Barrera, *Historia del fútbol en España* (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana de Publicaciones, S. A., 1930), 11; Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 5.

Bilbao Foot-Ball Club because of social connections between the two groups. Soon, Bilbao Foot-Ball Club even had a local shoemaker named Germán making boots for their players, marking an early example of specialized football equipment production. The location of the first clubs, their affiliation with the athletic movement represented by Gimnasio Zamacois, the British education of many of their founders, and even their creation of a small market for football equipment, mark these early clubs as bourgeois institutions.

Almost immediately, these two early clubs, Athletic Club and Bilbao F.C., intermingled with one another and they established the first joint board of directors in 1901.¹² To avoid problems, they combined their names to create Athletic Club de Bilbao and happily used the English words “athletic” and “club.” This reflected both the strong British influence and the willingness to embrace non-Spanish words and ideas that were common in a region developing its own nationalist movement in opposition to Madrid.¹³ Starting in the early 1890s and spurred onward by the events of 1898, Sabino Arana built up the Basque national movement. He emphasized the racial aspect of Basque identity as a means to separate natives from Spanish immigrants, who were drawn to Bilbao by the city’s economic success. The Basque movement was strongest among the region’s rural middle class, but it had ties in the urban, professional

¹² First Athletic Club de Bilbao board of directors; President: Luis Márquez, Vice-President: Francisco Iñiguez, Treasurer: José María Barquín, Secretary: Enrique Goiri, and Vocals: Alejandro Acha, Armada Arana, Luis Silva, and Fernando Iraolagoitia. *RFEF*, 22.

¹³ Three good histories of the nationalist movement in the Basque Country are Marianne Heiberg, *Making of the Basque Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); John Sullivan, *ETA and Basque Nationalism: The Fight For Euskadi 1890-1986* (London: Routledge, 1988); Daniele Conversi, *The Basques, the Catalans, and Spain* (London: Hurst, 1997).

middle classes as well. The British connection allowed Basques to feel superior to and more modern than “decadent” Madrid, which was exactly what the nationalist movement wanted. In fact, the Basque football community regularly used English words that they learned from their British business partners in this early period. Goalkeeper, back, half-back, trainer, forward, eleven, referee, team, foot-ballmen, and supporter were common terms used in Bilbao by enthusiasts long after their Castilian equivalents had been adopted in the rest of Spain.¹⁴ Euskadi (the native Basque language) was a very difficult language to learn so English was an attractive option on the football fields as a way to avoid using Castilian. The new club started with only 26 *socios* who paid 2.50 pesetas monthly for their membership. With that income the club rented the field next to the Lamiaco Electrical Plant for 200 pesetas a year which was well within their budget. The combination of the field’s location next to a new electric plant and the significant sum paid to rent those fields marked the new association as a professional middle-class endeavor.¹⁵

The purpose of this early alliance was so that the teams could pool their resources for competition on the national and international level, where they initially competed under the name Team Bizcaya. Players under that name competed in the first Spanish cup tournament held in Madrid in 1902 to mark Alfonso XIII’s investiture. Team Bizcaya also represented the Basque Country in several matches against the French club Burdigala de Bordeaux where they won also. The friendly atmosphere and

¹⁴ *San Mamés, la catedral* (Bilbao: Internacional Book Creation, 1982), 15.

¹⁵ Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 6.

success that the joint team attained made it easy for them to merge permanently in 1903 to produce the first dominant team in Spanish football. Athletic de Bilbao would go on to win five national cup championships in the first decade of the twentieth century and came to represent the ideal of middle-class amateurism as much as any other club in Spain. Athletic de Bilbao, and the Basque Country in general, would hold on tightly to the ideals of physical regeneration that had brought sport to Spain and the amateurism that represented those ideals. They would be some of the last clubs to embrace full professionalism and a few, such as Arenas de Guecho, completely disintegrated because of their refusal to accept it. This was the case because competition within the regions of the Basque country produced a more fractured football landscape that did not develop as easily into the mass entertainment oriented clubs of the 1920s, with the exception of Athletic de Bilbao.

Although Athletic quickly became the most important club in the region, several other cities in the Basque Country developed football clubs and they collectively produced a vibrant and active football community in the region. In particular, the towns of San Sebastián and Irún provided important early rivals within the region for their big brothers from Bilbao. In Irún three early teams developed, Irún Football Club, Irún Sporting Club, and Racing Club de Irún, with only one specifically focused on football and the other two developing out of general athletic and cycling clubs. Similarly in the beautiful resort town by the Spanish border, three other teams developed; San Sebastián Recreation Club, San Sebastián Football Club, and Club Ciclista de San Sebastián.

Football in San Sebastián was spurred by José Angel Berraondo, a founder and first captain of the club that eventually dominated the city, Real Sociedad de San Sebastián.¹⁶ Berraondo provides another good example of a Spaniard going to Britain for an education and returning with an interest in football. He had been sent to Britain for his secondary schooling and studied in the town of Brentford, where at fifteen years old he began to play with a local team as a left midfielder. When Brentford's club gained promotion to the English second division, he left Britain and went to Argentina to continue playing. Finally in 1905, Berraondo returned to San Sebastián, where he established one of the first clubs in the city and sparked enthusiasm for the new sport. Berraondo combined foreign experience, local connections, and middle-class prestige to become the perfect ambassador to spark interest in San Sebastián.

The last San Sebastián club mentioned above, Ciclista, provides a good reminder of how often early football clubs developed out of earlier cycling and general athletic societies. Essentially, in 1907 a local enthusiast name Miguel Sena established a football section within the local cycling club that was the largest athletic association in the city. This was a natural and easy step as the larger societies regularly developed new sections dedicated to different sports that their members became interested in. Within two years the new football section had won a national cup and established a field called Ondarreta near the beach of the same name. The football section grew so

¹⁶ José J. Aranjuelo [pseud. Erostarbe], *Historial de la Real Sociedad de San Sebastián* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso: Publicaciones Deportivas, 1941), 7-10.

large that it separated from the original society to avoid constant problems with those still interested primarily in cycling, and a new football club was founded.¹⁷

The development of teams in different cities throughout the Basque Country also produced the first regional rivalries as early as 1905. Such rivalries played a key role in developing mass interest and building support for the new clubs because they helped create local identities that gave their matches more meaning than simple collections of middle-class youths running around on a field. In 1905, teams from San Sebastián and Bilbao first faced one another on the football pitch when San Sebastián Recreativo Club came to play at the Lamiaco fields against Athletic Club de Bilbao on March 21.¹⁸ For the match, a special train service was arranged between train company representatives at the Arenas station and the two football clubs. These negotiations provided lower rates for members of San Sebastián Recreativo Club so that they could make the trip down to Bilbao cheaply. The train companies even provided designated railroad cars for the fans alone to travel on as a group. This was one of the first examples of the partnership between railroads and football clubs that soon become common across the peninsula. The idea received a warm reception from the railroads because the Spanish railways at the turn of the century were badly underutilized. Rail lines had been built on the assumption that their existence would stimulate demand, but that demand often took decades to materialize. Therefore, railroad companies were happy to make special arrangements that guaranteed income and both sides benefited.

¹⁷ Aranjuelo, *Real Sociedad*, 24-26.

¹⁸ *San Mamés*, 23-25.

There was another marketing innovation introduced in 1905 that promoted the public face of the club within the city. In that year, Athletic once again made it to the national cup finals and the club directors for the first time directly embraced popular support.¹⁹ They invited fans to gather outside the central telephone office in Bilbao during the match. Through the telephone, they provided periodic match updates for the gathered fans and created real-time excitement during an away match that were similar to the updates provided via telegraph for baseball games in the United States. The large collection of supporters provided a good time for everyone, enhanced enthusiasm for the game, and promoted the inclusion of the city in general in the events.

These new ways of rallying interest and support for football clubs also led to the creation of a local championship, the Copa Vizcaya, in 1906. The overt goal of the tournament was the promotion of the “hygienic sport of football,” placing the championship soundly within the goals and community of the early athletic movement.²⁰ On the other hand, clubs were tempted to join by a seven hundred and fifty peseta first place prize and a three hundred and fifty peseta second place prize, as well as medals to the eleven players of each team. Three teams entered the competition, Athletic de Bilbao, a mixed Anglo-Vasco side, and players from a local Alpine Club, Athletic won handily. The event was so successful that its matches became “social events” in Bilbao. The crowds included many “distinguished ladies” who marked the social prestige of being a player and the new sport’s support within the Bilbao elite and

¹⁹ *San Mamés*, 24-30.

²⁰ *San Mamés* 28.

middle-class. As football became more popular and working class, the fan base was increasingly dominated by men. In this early phase, however, women were a regular and important mark of the sport's elevated social standing. Quite simply, early players were not being paid and played for fun and prestige among their social circle.²¹ As Gregorio de Marañón argued, impressing women with their physical prowess was one of the players' goals and one of sport's central roles prior to the 1920s.²²

As a result of these rivalries and growing popular interest, by 1910 the first bond in Spain between a football club and its city was established through a series of events at the end of decade. Between December 1908 and June 1909 Athletic played a series of four matches against Club Ciclista de San Sebastián. This series included two matches at Lamiaco, one at Atocha (the main field in San Sebastián), and one in Madrid during the national cup championship. This run of matches established the main regional rivalry within the Basque Country and rallied supporters in both cities to their respective clubs. The development of such rivalries was absolutely critical to the expansion of clubs into professional and commercial ventures. Essentially, it was the creation of an "other" for the respective clubs as the term is used by Eric Hobsbawm when discussing nationalism.²³ By establishing a rival, the club produced a hated enemy that everyone in a city, neighborhood, or later social class could rally against

²¹ The greatest star of the 1910s, Rafael Moreno or popularly "Pichichi," exemplified this idea of social prestige gained from playing. He was portrayed in the painting "Dialogo de campos de sport" (Painting 4.2) wearing his uniform chatting up his future wife along a fence.

²² Gregorio Marañón, *La acción como carácter sexual* (Madrid: Caro Raggio, 1925).

²³ Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," In *Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1-14.

regardless of their own socio-economic differences. The process worked on the city, regional, and national levels meaning that many football clubs developed numerous enemies. By the 1920s, almost every team that survived had at least one “eternal rival” because they were a necessary part of creating a local identity and a local identity was necessary for financial success.

Finally, the change that resulted from new promotional ideas and the development of local rivalries between 1898 and 1910 was demonstrated in the club’s reception after the cup tournament of that year. On March 10, 1910, Athletic de Bilbao once again won the national cup held that year in rival San Sebastián. When they won the first cup eight years earlier there had been no public celebration, the team members had won a relatively small prize, and they had paid their own way to Madrid. In comparison, the players in 1910 were hailed in the banner headline of a local newspaper with massive letters proclaiming “Hurra por los bilbaínos.”²⁴ The directors of the club put up a letter in the window of the famous salon Olimpia calling “Bilbaínos, acudid a la estación. Llegaron los campeones de España. ¡Viva el Athletic!” and that is exactly what the club’s supporters did. One reporter wrote that “cuando llegaron a la estación de Achuri, todos quisieron entrar a un tiempo y se cargaron violentamente las puertas...Al llegar el tren, el momento es solemne, grandioso. Vivas, cohetes, sombreros al aire...”²⁵ Importantly, the Bilbao newspapers actively provided publicity for the event. Football victories were events for the newspapers to trumpet boldly to

²⁴ *San Mamés*, 44-45.

²⁵ *San Mamés*, 45. This report is quoted in the history, but the name or paper of the reporter is not given and I have been unable to identify the specific story.

sell themselves, and this provided a useful symbiosis between the entertainment sport and the newspaper press that would be better exploited in the coming decades. Later celebrations included an informal parade through the streets of the city passing through the Plaze del Mercado, Carnicería Vieja, Bidebarrieta, puente de Isabel II, Estación, plaza Circular, and Grand Vía until they finally reached the Federación Atlética. Significantly, almost the entire march went through the newly built Ensanche district of the city that was almost entirely filled with by the elite and middle classes neighborhoods of the new industrial elite. They brought the cup itself to the house of the president of Athletic de Bilbao for safekeeping. Quite simply, this was a huge event celebrated all across the city with thousands in attendance. Athletic de Bilbao was no longer simply a group of middle-class students, although that essential character remained. The sport and the club were becoming a form of mass entertainment and the events of March 1910 in Bilbao were only an antecedent of things to come

Barcelona: The First Football Community

The region that most enthusiastically embraced the new sport was Catalonia and its center, the city of Barcelona. Much of the enthusiasm for the new sport came because of the already developed athletic world that existed in Catalonia by 1900. There were cycling clubs all over the region, newspapers like *Los Deportes* dedicated to athletics, and gymnasiums such as Gimnasio Solé. The enthusiasm of the city's citizens for sport had even been held up as a national example in 1900 during the Second

Assembly and First National Festival of the Federación Gimnástica Española. Included among the activities was a demonstration of football by the foreign colonies of English and Scottish players who lived in the city as employees of foreign businesses. It was these foreigners temporarily living in Barcelona who introduced football into the active athletic community of the region. As the sport developed, Barcelona's football clubs came to represent the two divided sections of the city's middle classes that split over the development of a regional Catalan identity. Both sides were essentially Catholic, conservative, and willing to embrace modern "European" practices, but they divided painfully in their attitudes toward the central government in Madrid. Over the decade, F.C. Barcelona became the club that the *catalanista* faction embraced, while Español de Barcelona gained support from the *españolista* section of the professional middle classes as the two groups reproduced their differences within the football world.

Surprisingly, the first football club in Catalonia came from outside Barcelona. The first officially recognized club was Palamós Foot-ball Club established in 1898 by Gaspar Matas, who had learned the sport during a brief trip to England. Although Palamós would never be an important club itself, Matas would go on to be one of the most prominent owners in Barcelona for the next thirty years as the director of Europa F.C. in the 1920s. At the same time, an early football section formed within the Club Gimnástico de Tarragona just down the road from Barcelona. Just as in the Basque Country, the development of football sections was the most natural way for the sport to spread. Middle-class youths already met at the gymnasiums established around

Catalonia, so it was a simple step from there to gather people interested in learning the new sport. Usually, the spark came from the British, Swiss, Dutch, and other foreigners employed in Catalonia and interested in playing football as they did in their homelands. Football sections within gymnastic clubs, however, rarely came to dominate the larger society and they usually founded their own “football-only” societies once enough people were interested.

The person who finally sparked the official organization of football in Barcelona was a twenty-year old Swiss man named Hans Gamper. Born in 1887 in Winterthur, Switzerland, Gamper played for clubs in Basil and Zurich, helped found a club called Excelsior Winterthur, and became a well-known player in his home country.²⁶ His uncle, Emil Gaissert, encouraged Gamper to come to Barcelona and work there for the Zurich Insurance Company established in the city in 1884 and Gamper arrived within the year. Once in Barcelona, young Hans played football in his spare time, usually with other foreigners, in posh neighborhood of San Gervasio where Antoní Gaudí built the Parc Güell. In search of more players, Gamper soon went to the two most important gymnasiums in the city in an attempt to build support. First, Gamper and his friend Walter Wild went to the Gimnasio Tolosa located near Turó Park and run by the gymnastics enthusiast Jaime Vila. The story is that the pair visited an informal practice of the Tolosa gymnasium football team at the Bonanova fields in 1899. After the practice they asked if the Tolosa players wanted to form a club but received a non-

²⁶ Augusti Rodes i Català, *Founders of F.C. Barcelona*, trans. John Beattie (Barcelona: Ediciones JOICA, 2000), 21-23.

committal response because both Gamper and Wild were Swiss and Vila did not want foreign players.

After being rebuffed, Gamper tried the second important gymnasium in Barcelona, the Gimnasio Solé that was the center of the Sociedad Gimnástica Catalana and the newspaper *Los Deportes*. Here he received a positive response from the owner, Manuel Solé, but no one there knew how to play, so few members joined. Finally on October 22, 1899, Gamper took the legendary step hailed as the foundation of F.C. Barcelona. In desperation he put an advertisement in the newspaper *Los Deportes*. Asserting his credentials as an “old Swiss champion,” Gamper invited anyone interested in playing football matches to come to an organizational meeting later that week.²⁷ The pages of *Los Deportes* over the subsequent months report on the rapid development of the new club after the initial advertisement. The October 29 issue featured a picture of Gamper on the cover and on December 3 they reported the meeting that founded the new club under the name Football Club Barcelona.²⁸ Within a month, the group filed official papers, was recognized by the Civil Governor of Barcelona, and began playing matches against anyone that would face them.²⁹ This process of having to file official papers with the civil government should again be noted as a common step that all clubs took. Under the Ley de Asociaciones of 1887, to function as an association every club

²⁷ “Miscelánea,” *Los Deportes*, 3, no. 25, 22 October 1899, 968.

²⁸ *Los Deportes* 3, no. 35, 29 October 1899, 973; “Football Club Barcelona,” *Los Deportes* 3, no. 40, 3 December, 1056.

²⁹ The original executive council of FC Barcelona was President: Walter Gualterio Wild, Vice-President: John Parsons, Secretary: Luis de Ossó, Bartolomé Terradas, Vocals: Adolfo López, William Parsons, Otto Krunzle, Otto Maier, Enrique Ducal, Pedro Cabot, Carlos Puyol, and Jose Llovet. *RFEF*, 21.

had to register with the local government just like a union or political party.

Registration provided clubs with the freedom to act as they chose and run significant budgets. Without such registration any assets they acquired had to be officially owned by one person and club organization swiftly became contentious since club funding came from the monthly dues of each member.

Most of the early Barcelona clubs games were played against players from the English and Scottish communities within Barcelona. For example, their second match on December 10, 1899 was against an English Select team whom they played again on January 6 of the new year.³⁰ Then in February, F.C. Barcelona played matches against a club called F.C. Escociá (a collection of Scots in the city) on what *Los Deportes* called “una tarde espléndida y un gentío numerosísimo, que demostró la afición que en esta capital se va desarrollando el juego de Foot-ball.”³¹ Through these matches football became a novelty spectacle in the city and drew the attention of the athletic community that it needed to develop greater interest among Barcelonan bourgeoisie.

Soon after the foundation of F.C. Barcelona another team appeared in the city as the rival of Gamper’s club and with the avowed goal of exclusively including local, not foreign, players. This team called itself F.C Catalá and consisted primarily of players from the Gimnasio Tolosa that had rebuffed Gamper’s advances a few months earlier and provided the first step towards a Catalan regionalist identity in football. The president of the new club was Jaime Vila and while the rival team officially organized

³⁰ “Miscelánea,” *Los Deportes*, 3, no. 41, 10 December, 1079; *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 2, 14 January 1900, 24.

³¹ *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 5, 4 February 1900, 76.

itself in late December 1899 it claimed to have been playing for several months before that, making them the first team in the city.³² A rivalry immediately sprang up between the two clubs especially when it was observed that Catalá frequently fielded a number of Scottish and other foreign players, despite their claim to have refused Gamper because he was Swiss. This became painfully clear in a match in February 11, 1900, between the two clubs when Catalá fielded a team of six Scots and five Catalans and controversy and recriminations erupted between the two sides.³³

The other argument between the two societies was the dispute over which club, Barcelona or Catalá, was the first club established in the city, and it raged through the pages of *Los Deportes* in the first years of the century. While these two disputes are largely immaterial to anyone but die-hard Barcelona football fans, they do provide useful insights into the divisions and rules of Barcelona's social world. The story of Gamper being rebuffed by the Tolosa gymnasium has been repeated over the century in almost every club history of F.C. Barcelona. The most important of these are Daniel Carbó's early 1924 work, *Historial del F.C. Barcelona*, and the two fifty-year anniversary histories *Historia del C.F. Barcelona* by Alberto Maluquer y Maluquer and *Cincuenta años del C.F. Barcelona* by Andrés Artós, both published in 1949.³⁴ These

³² "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes*, 3, no. 43, 24 December 1899, 1108. This claim carries some weight since Gamper himself had watched a practice at the Tolosa gym before placing his advertisement. It also reaffirms the initial preference in the Barcelona athletic community for the more conservative and discipline-oriented German gymnastics over British sport, although that quickly faded away.

³³ "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 6, 11 February 1900, 91.

³⁴ These three books are the "classic" works on the history of F.C. Barcelona. All three were written for club anniversaries and certainly have to be viewed as club propaganda as much or more so than historical records. Nonetheless, they also provide valuable insights into the formation of the team's identity over time and how it wanted to be perceived as well as valuable sources for anecdotes. It is also worth noting

three histories of F.C. Barcelona all attribute the shunning of Hans Gamper by the Tolosa gymnasium to the desire to promote local players instead of foreign ones. All of them, however, were colored by the rivalry that developed between Barcelona and Español and that established the two as the Catalan and Spanish teams of the city respectively. The rivalry's early identification in Carbó's 1924 book is especially significant because Carbó was a journalist for the politically *catalanista* newspaper, *La Veu de Catalunya*. All three club histories draw their information largely from a series of articles that appeared in *Los Deportes* over the course of 1900. These articles suggest a second point that despite the grandstanding between the two clubs, much of the real conflict was over the more practical matter of who had the right to play at the Bonanova fields.³⁵

A third approach suggests that Gamper was turned away by the Tolosa gymnasium simply because its members were not immediately interested. The official version of the Real Federación Española de Fútbol (RFEF) is predictably conciliatory and suggests that Vila only wanted to play with balls as a gymnastic activity, not as a sport unto itself. This scenario argues essentially that the emphasis of the Tolosa gym

that the name of the club is different in the mid-century books. This is because Barcelona was forced adopt the hispanized "Club de Football" instead of the English "Football Club" during the rule of Francisco Franco. The three books are: Daniel Carbó, *Historial del F.C. Barcelona* (Barcelona: Costa, 1924); Alberto Maluquer y Maluquer, *Historia del C.F. Barcelona* (Barcelona: Arimany, 1949); Andrés Artós, *Cincuenta años del C.F. Barcelona* (Barcelona: C.F. Barcelona, 1949).

³⁵ The key articles are: "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 8, 11 February 1900, 91; "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 8, 25 February 1900, 123; "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 15, 15 April 1900, 235; "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 16, April 22 1900, 251; "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes*, 4, no. 17, 29 April 1900, 266. It is also noteworthy that these articles are all part of a regular column on football that appears for the first time that year and is an example of how the profile of the sport in Barcelona rose dramatically that year.

was pedagogical and that they had little initial interest in the sport itself until Gamper's club became popular.³⁶ This argument conveniently connected with the desire to implant physical education, but it is simply not significant enough to explain the later enmity that developed.

Finally, a fourth argument provides a better insight into the cultural politics and divisions of Barcelona at the turn of the century. A current author named Austrí Rodes i Catalá claims that Gamper and his Swiss friends were snubbed by the Tolosa gymnasts, not because they were foreign, but because they were Protestant.³⁷ Rodes argues in effective detail that the Tolosa gymnasium and their club F.C. Catalá included plenty of foreign players, but that almost all of them were Scottish or English Protestants who made less of a public demonstration of their faith. The only Protestant churches in Barcelona at the time existed under the protection of the Swiss and German consulates. To verify the division, Rodes searched the records of these Protestant churches and none of the Scottish and English players listed as playing for Catalá between 1899 and 1901 are included on their registers. They were, therefore, Catholics (or at least Protestants who did not attend the city's Protestant churches) making them acceptable foreigners to the Spanish club. In comparison, young Protestants played either for Barcelona, the temporary English and Scottish Select teams, or a short-lived

³⁶ *RFEF*, 20.

³⁷ Rodes, *Founders*, 41-3. Augustí Rodes is himself not exactly an objective writer as his clear goal in the book is to venerate the Swiss and German Protestant community in turn-of-the-century Barcelona that he comes from. His work is, nonetheless, extremely interesting and well researched as he has combed painstakingly through the records of both F.C. Barcelona and the registries of the Protestant churches of Barcelona. In so doing he provides an interesting understanding of the religious divisions created in the condal city by industrialization and commercial developments.

team called Hispania.³⁸ Hispania F.C. was initially comprised of the employees of the Hispania Insurance Company established around the same time as a subsidiary to the Zurich Insurance Company, although it soon became “hispanized” as well.

These religious divisions and their resonance within Barcelona society played a significant role in F.C. Barcelona’s development. The Barcelonan economy experienced successful commercial and industrial growth over the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This growth solidified the city’s position as a vital port of entry for goods and foreign commercial firms and helped make it the most cosmopolitan city in Spain. This economic openness further sparked the slowly forming cultural and political Catalan autonomy movements (one Conservative and middle class and the other Liberal and working class). Both regionalist movements adopted an international attitude that became popular in Barcelona society. As a result of these economic and social factors, a variety of foreign companies established themselves in the city in the first decade of the new century. Examples of these new corporations include the previously mentioned Hispania Insurance Company, the Hispano-Suiza motor car firm, and the often-discussed Canadiense electrical company where the 1919 strike broke out. This corporate presence produced significant expatriate colonies of French, Italian, English, Scottish, German, and Swiss nationals in Barcelona that dwarfed their equivalents in Bilbao and other Spanish cities. The 1879 census reported roughly seven thousand foreigners in the city and by the 1900 census there were at least one thousand

³⁸ Rodes, *Founders*, 56-57.

Protestant foreigners alone.³⁹ This community supported at least six Protestant churches and Protestant schools as well that were protected by the Swiss consulate.

The case of football provides a demonstration of the limits of toleration in the city. The citizens of Barcelona were tolerant and outward-looking and they quickly embraced the growing international sport of football. It brought them into accord with the cultural activities of the rest of Europe and provided a form of conspicuous consumption through which the successful middle-class marked itself off within the community. That moderation and openness, however, did not extend to religious freedom, and Barcelona's citizens would not accept the beliefs of the people who brought the new sport to them. Instead, the foreign Protestant community was legally restricted in its religious activities by a royal order dated to October 23, 1876. Essentially, Protestant ceremonies were restricted to within the walls of a recognized church or cemetery.

The religious division separated Catholic and Protestant athletes within the city even though many of the early athletic societies were founded by Protestants. Quite simply, both F.C. Barcelona and Barcelona Tennis Club had to be purged of their Protestant founders for the Catholic citizens of the city to embrace them. In the case of F.C. Barcelona, within four years of its 1899 foundation the club was almost completely purged of Protestant members. The movement was led by a native Catalan and the club's founding secretary, Luis d'Ossó. D'Ossó was a fervent Catholic who overtly

³⁹ Rodes, *Founders*, 18-19.

strove to “cleanse” the club of Protestants and make it a truly Spanish side. Quite simply “deep down he [D’Ossós] was not too keen on the presence of foreigners in the team. His aim was to train Spanish players in order to get rid of the maestros...”⁴⁰ This division also manifested itself personally-- creating a division between the two most outspoken leaders of the club, D’Ossó and Gamper, that lasted throughout their lives.⁴¹ As a result of this purge, F.C. Barcelona became one of the most ultra-Catholic clubs in Spain. Today it features a shrine to the Virgin of Montserrat within the massive Camp Nou Stadium and even expects the current players to pray there before important matches. Much of the drive that turned Barça into an overtly Catholic organization, therefore, was the need to blot out its Protestant origins and satisfy the conservative Catholic Lliga Regionalista from which the team sought to draw support.

This point is driven home by a short history of Hans Gamper’s own religious identity in Barcelona and the changes it underwent before his death in 1930. After the hispanization of F.C. Barcelona in early 1900s, Gamper separated himself from the club he had founded and only participated loosely for half a decade. Between 1907 and 1909, however, the economic climate changed in Barcelona, producing layoffs and lower wages across the city and economic problems everywhere. The general economic downturn also brought problems and economic hardship for Barcelona’s young football culture, as both early fans and the club members themselves had less time and money for conspicuous consumption. All over the city, members backed out of clubs and

⁴⁰ Rodes, *Founders*, 142.

⁴¹ This information comes from a personal letter from Miquel d’Ossó to Augustí Rodes i Catalá cited in Rodes, *Founders*, 146.

many teams like Catalá folded completely, while others came to the brink of disbanding.

The crisis for F.C. Barcelona came in November 1908, when membership fell from one-hundred and ninety-eight *socios* several years earlier to only thirty four and a meeting was called with the expected purpose of dissolving the society. At the meeting on December 2, the current president Vicenç Reig resigned his office and one of the remaining members asked if anyone was willing to step in and save the club. As legend has it, Gamper rose to his feet and declared “Barcelona must not and cannot be allowed to die. If no one is willing to do the job of saving it, then I will personally take it on from now onwards.”⁴² Regardless of the veracity of this club legend, Gamper launched himself into the maintenance and financial resurrection of the club. He served as club president from 1910 until 1925 and went to businesses, friends, and anyone he could convince to give money to the club on a promise of turning it into something grand. His work was rewarded in the 1910s and 1920s, as we shall see in the next chapter. This huge reversal of fortune was brought about by the club’s economic problems, but it was feasible because of Gamper’s recent marriage. In 1907, he married Emma Pillourd who was a French-speaking Swiss women-- and a Catholic.⁴³ Whether or not it was a conscious choice by Gamper, this shifted his religious identity within Barcelona.

⁴² This quote appears in a recent club history of F.C. Barcelona by the Englishman Jimmy Burns, a journalist for the *Financial Times* who has written several books on Spain and football. His 1999 book, *Barça: A People’s Passion*, has excellent resources and particularly interviews, but also the typical flaws of a club history: rampant jingoism, shaky historical grounding, and no citations. The lack of citations makes it hard to have complete faith in his quotations. Jimmy Burns, *Barça: A People’s Passion* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 83.

⁴³ Rodes, *Founders*, 140-1, 45.

Contemporary newspapers repeatedly pointed out that she was Catholic and as a result Gamper himself became acceptable as a public figure in the city.

There is no evidence that Gamper himself converted to Catholicism, but from his wedding onward he gradually became accepted in the Spanish/Catalan community as he worked to resurrect the fortunes of F.C. Barcelona. The process was so successful that in 1924 Daniel Carbó could eulogize and present him as the great founder and hero at the club's silver anniversary. In the prologue to his book, Carbó wrote that for the club "Hans Gamper has been its hope and its salvation. And with the faith, enthusiasm, and love for Barça that he bore within, part and parcel of his very life, he has rekindled the dying embers and caused the deep red and blue banners to stream with glory and triumph."⁴⁴ Carbó even bathed him in religious imagery, describing Gamper as having "breathed, with an apostle's faith and a prophet's stare, tenacity, prophetic vision, faith and enthusiasm, perseverance, [and] duty as a priest." By then Gamper had been accepted into the general community of the city. He had led the team's efforts to build the stadium of Las Corts, and the club had held a huge celebration in his honor on February 25, 1923, at which they unveiled a bust of him in the stadium.

The local population's acceptance of Gamper, despite his ambivalent religious identity, can also be seen on the occasion of his death in July 1930. As a result of the collapse of his business after the worldwide 1929 stock crash, Gamper committed suicide.⁴⁵ As reported in Barcelona's newspapers, he was buried in the Protestant

⁴⁴ Carbó, *Historial*, prologue.

⁴⁵ He had already been forced to disassociate himself from the club as a result of political problems

enclosure in the Cementerio Nuevo of Barcelona with a diverse collection of people in attendance.⁴⁶ First of all, none of the newspaper reports even hinted that his death was a suicide, which would have seriously diminished his legacy in the eyes of the club's Catholic fans. In fact, Gamper almost certainly remained Protestant, as suggested both by his burial in the Protestant section and by the attendance of many members and representatives of the Swiss community in Barcelona who provided wreaths for the ceremony. In comparison, the actual funeral was held at the parish Church of San Pedro de las Puellas and the ceremony was presided over by the Catholic priest Reverend Luís Sabater. None of the newspapers mentioned the presence of any Protestant ministers or ceremonies at all or that many of the wreaths were provided by Protestant groups and individuals, although the church records themselves indicate that there was a significant Protestant presence. Further, the longest obituary was published by the Catalan language newspaper, *La Publicitat*, that reported the attendance of a variety of public figures in the region including: Protestants- the Swiss Consul and a representative of the Swiss Charitable Society and Catholics- Gaspar Rosás (President of F.C. Barcelona), Josep Sunyol (President of the Catalan Football Foundation), Joan Cabot (Secretary of the Spanish Football Federation and Cortes representative), and Ferran Valls i Taberner (an important figure in the Lliga Regionalists and the Mancomunitat). These varied reports establish mostly that Gamper's religious identity

connected to the club's development of a Catalan identity. The mid-1920s were marred by conflict between the club and the Primo de Rivera dictatorship that led to several matches cancelled or played in a closed stadium and Gamper's forced resignation from the club's leadership.

⁴⁶ Perhaps the most useful portion of Rodes book is an extended report on the account of Gamper's death based on his collection of the newspapers reports of the funeral on pages 124-129.

had become extremely confused. He was still a member of the Swiss Protestant community privately, but through marriage and association Gamper had publicly embraced Catholicism, a requirement for his role as the leader and founder of Barcelona's largest and, by 1930, most Catalan football club. In conclusion, early-twentieth century Barcelona had opened itself to modern, foreign ideas and activities that broke with tradition in many ways. Religious freedom, however, was still not contemplated and for foreigners and Protestants to have a public life their religious identities had to be Catholic or at the very least ambiguous.

F.C. Barcelona and F.C. Catalá did not develop alone, but were the most important teams in a large football community that developed in the city. A year after Barcelona's foundation in 1899 more teams swiftly appeared all over the city. Hispania F.C. has already been mentioned, but even more important was establishment of a club named Sociedad Española de Football. A young engineering student named Angel Rodríguez Ruiz organized this fourth club at a meeting at the Casa Martino. He had the support of the wealthy de la Riva family and the club grew rapidly.⁴⁷ The team played its first match on September 24, 1900, in the Plaza de Armas of the Parque de Ciudadela in the center of the city, a start that provided the club with significant prestige from the outset. Subsequently, the new club came to dominate the most important early fields in the city next to the Hotel Casanovas. By 1903, the team was renamed Club Español de Football to mark its rapid rise and it provided the basis for the second

⁴⁷ José L. Lasplazas and Carlos Pardo, *Historial del Real Club Deportivo Española* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso- Publicaciones Deportivas num. 11, 1941), 11-13.

“historic” club of Barcelona, Real Club Deportivo Español. Español gradually picked up players from Catalá and took its place as the Spanish team of the city in opposition to F.C. Barcelona’s foreign and later Catalan identity. These clubs formed the core of the Barcelona football community in the prosperous first decade of the new century and on into the 1910s as well.

This division within the Barcelona football community exactly mirrored the political, cultural, and social divisions developing from 1900 on within the city’s bourgeoisie. Almost everyone in Barcelona, from the middle classes upwards, was generally conservative and Catholic in outlook. They gradually developed into two camps, however, the *catalanistas* and the *españolistas*. *Catalanistas* increasingly felt that the Madrid government made decisions that directly hindered Barcelona’s industrial development to the advantage of the Castilian landed elite. As a result, they wanted some level of regional autonomy for their own policies and venerated the independent Catalan past and language to promote this goal. In 1902, they formed the Lliga Regionalist to fought for this goal, which the eventually had some success with in the 1910s. The leader of the movement was Enric Prat de la Riba, a politician and lawyer, who established the tenets of the movement in his 1906 book, *La nacionalitat catalana*.⁴⁸ In comparison, the minority *españolistas* were also businessmen and professionals, but many of them were actually from other regions of Spain or saw no benefit to regional autonomy. As a result, they maintained a pro-Madrid outlook that

⁴⁸ Enric Prat de la Riba, *La nacionalitat catalana* (1906; reprint, Barcelona: Ediciones 62, 1986).

divided the city's elite and F.C. Barcelona and Español de Barcelona came to represent the two different sides of this middle-class social divide within the football world.

Besides the two main clubs, there were also many other football teams formed in Catalonia. For seven years after 1900, Barcelona contained numerous clubs that played one another constantly and organized a variety of local competitions. As well as Barcelona, Catalá, Español, and Hispania there were first of all Escocés (players from the Scottish colony) and Irish (players from the Irish colony) that represented the foreign communities of engineers and white collar workers in the city, although naturally their importance faded over time as more Spaniards became involved. There were Spanish teams like Torino, Ibérica, and Internacional, and clubs that took on a regional allegiance such as Catalonia and Catalunya. These teams had *catalanista* identities similar to F.C. Barcelona, but lacked the size and importance of the larger club. Universitari was the earliest embodiment of numerous later clubs filled out by students from the University of Barcelona, while Salud Sports Club was one of the first of the increasingly numerous neighborhood or *barrio* clubs that represented mostly middle-class neighborhoods in modern western sections of the city. Finally, F.C. Santanach represented a third small but dedicated gymnasium in Barcelona that played a minor, but persistent, role in the city's sporting community.⁴⁹ Nor is the list of early clubs limited to Barcelona. The neighboring textile town of Sabadell developed a

⁴⁹ Arturo Santanach was another early crusader for athletics in Barcelona. Although his small gymnasium never gained the numbers or importance of the Tolosa and Solé gymnasiums it maintained a loyal following that stuck with it after the other gymnasiums were largely subsumed into the FGE. His importance in the community was paid tribute to in a small article in 1904. "Arturo Santanach," *Los Deportes* 8, no. 303, 12 June 1908, 363.

strong early football tradition led by Sabdell F.C. and as early as 1908 a team from Valencia made the trip up the coast to Barcelona to compete and represent that city.

The establishment of so many early clubs graphically illustrates two important changes in Barcelona and Catalonia in general. First of all, the Catalan industrial middle-class clearly embraced the sport. Barcelona simply contained more industry and workshops than anywhere else in Spain. Despite expectations, those industries continued to prosper after the loss of the markets of Cuba and the Philippines after 1898 and cutbacks did not strike the city until the end of the decade and even then were only temporary. As a result, the city's emergent white-collar middle classes had the resources and affluence to enjoy the new sport for most of the decade. Second, playing football served as a form of conspicuous consumption for the Barcelonan middle-classes of all types and levels. In particular, white collar workers and the sons of factory owners seemed to gravitate to sport as they strove to assert the new class identity and lives of leisure that their father's business success made possible for them. It was a foreign activity most associated with elite British schools, satisfied the hygienic goals of the athletic movement, took place in open spaces in the center of the city where everyone could watch, and used special shoes and colored team shirts to further identify themselves as middle-class. Quite simply, football played a key social role in establishing the urban, industrial middle-class as distinct group within the city.

Support for the new sport rapidly grew beyond the first four teams from 1900. As early as November 18, 1900, roughly four thousand spectators turned out to watch

F.C. Barcelona and Hispania play a match at the Velodromo de Bonanova, twice as many onlookers as the first national cup final would bring out in Madrid two years later.⁵⁰ The journalists of *Los Deportes* themselves noted football's rapid development that same month, writing in the newspaper's new column "Foot-Ball":

Si no les bastan tales pruebas, dirijan sus preguntas á algunos de los que más enterados están de los asuntos de los clubs, y les enterarán de que á pesar de haber transcurrido tan sólo un año de la fundación de los más antiguos, se dedican á este juego más de 200 individuos, cuyo número va aumentando cada día, habiendo otros que, en la imposibilidad de practicarlo, les prestan su innumerables proyectos de suma importancia para el completo desarrollo de foot-ball.⁵¹

To promote the sport, F.C. Barcelona even organized an informal match for members of non-football athletic societies in the city in February 1901. The match pitted members of the Real Club de Regatas de Barcelona against *socios* from various local cycling clubs including Club Velocipédico (led by Luis de Ossó), Velo Club, Tortuga Ciclista, Sociedad de Velocipedistas and Unión Velocipédica Española.⁵² The match drives home the rising importance of football within the interconnected athletic community of the city.

The development of numerous regional tournaments in Catalonia also helped to promote football. Competitions provided a reason for friends to organize themselves into clubs, instead of simply playing informally, and were events that could be

⁵⁰ José L. Lasplazas and Carlos Pardo, *El Barcelona C.F. hacia su medio siglo de historia* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso: Publicaciones Deportivas no. 9. May 1941), 13.

⁵¹ "Foot-Ball," *Los Deportes* 4, no. 44, 4 November 1900, 698.

⁵² *Los Deportes* 5, no. 5, 3 February 1901, 71-2.

promoted to draw in new participants. The earliest tournament in Barcelona was the Copa Macaya followed quickly by the Copa Barcelona.⁵³ Another competition was the Challenge de los Pirineos where Barcelonan clubs challenged French teams from Marseilles and other cities in southwestern France. There was also the small Copa Ciudad-La Riva, a tournament hosted by Español and named after their benefactors the de la Riva family.

The most important of these early competitions was the Copa Macaya started in 1901, thanks to the donation of an expensive cup by a community leader. The organizers first advertised the competition in the December, 1900 issue of *Los Deportes* with eleven rules for inscription.⁵⁴ In January, the secretaries of the four registered clubs, Barcelona, Hispania, Español, F.C. Santanach met and planned a meeting at the cafe *Els Quatre Gats*. At the meeting, the secretaries worked out the fields, times, and dates for the competition and dealt with other clubs who wanted to enter such as Tarragona F.C., Aplech Escolar de Fútbol (the first incarnation of the University of Barcelona's team), and a club named Sociedad Franco Española (consisting largely of French immigrants to the city). Hispania won the inaugural tournament, but the competition was fierce and balanced over the years with Barcelona winning in 1902 and Español capturing the trophy in 1903. This early competitiveness starkly contrasts with the developments in Madrid and Bilbao, where smaller athletic communities were dominated by one or two teams. Instead, Barcelona's community was large enough so

⁵³ Lasplazas, *Española*, 7.

⁵⁴ "Foot-ball," *Los Deportes* 4, no. 50, 16 December 1900, 796-7; "Foot-ball," *Los Deportes* 5, no. 1, 6 January 1901, 9; "Foot-ball," *Los Deportes* 5, no. 2, 13 January 1901, 25.

that one team never fully dominated the city. Instead, several clubs emerged with roughly equal support and a vibrant competitive life developed *within* the city. This provided Barcelona with a more independent football community that would be more willing to embrace changes such as professionalization in the 1920s and which mirrored Catalonia's political independence. With the encouragement of F.C. Barcelona, the region's clubs established their own Asociación de Clubs de Fútbol as early as 1904 and in 1909, Hans Gamper and Narciso Másferrer, a founder of the FGE, changed the name to Federación Catalana de Clubs de Fútbol to incorporate teams from all over the region as a powerful bloc within the national football community.⁵⁵

By the end of the decade, however, economic troubles across Spain in general and within Barcelona in particular produced a period of retrenchment and reordering within Catalan football. Many football clubs simply fell apart financially and ceased to exist, a fate that even befell some of the most important teams of the city. Of the original four, Hispania and Catalá ceased to exist and those of their *socios* who could still afford to play moved over to Barcelona and Español. The new decade brought a new football world to Barcelona that would dramatically change the city's clubs and competitions.

⁵⁵ Lasplazes, *Barcelona*, 19, 30.

Madrid: The Academic Introduction

Madrid was the last of Spain's major cities to embrace football. Because of the sport's late arrival, both foreign contacts and Spaniards who came to Madrid from Barcelona and Bilbao introduced football to the capital. The first great spur to the sport's adoption in Madrid was the educational reforms of the ILE that built up interest in football in the city. Football developed within the professional and intellectual elite that centered around the ILE and was often referred to as the "extended *institución*." This meant the early *footballistas* in Madrid had connections to the left-wing of the Spanish Liberal party that gained them occasional favor with the city government. They drew their membership from the better middle-class neighborhoods throughout the city, and other members were from the provinces, such as Oviedo and Valencia, who came to Madrid to study at the university. The second impetus came from the city's significant Basque community, whose members learned to play football in Bilbao and San Sebastián before coming to the capital for school and work. Finally, the original Sociedad Gimnástica Española (SGE) also sparked interest in football through encouraging interest in athletics in general and eventually supporting its own football section in the 1910s. Although the Madrileño societies developed slightly later than in Huelva, Barcelona, and Bilbao they were the first to look beyond the regional level. Most notably, it was football clubs from Madrid that organized the first national tournament in 1902, in honor of Alfonso XIII's coronation. The event provided an

opportunity for the leaders of Madrid F.C. to take up leadership through formal development of the tournament and clubs all over the country were soon officially founded to facilitate participation in the tournament. This succession of events turned Madrid into the formal center of Spanish football, replicating the country's political organization within the football world despite the fact that it was by no means the largest football community.

Madrid provides the purest example of football being introduced through educational ties, generally with Great Britain. As discussed in Chapter 2, the earliest and by far the most powerful example of football's introduction through educational ties were the efforts of the Institución Libre de Enseñanza (ILE) as it integrated a variety of sports and games into its curriculum in the late nineteenth century. The ILE took many of its educational ideals from the British public school system and one of the most important of these was the creation of complete individuals who developed both their minds and their bodies in balanced harmony. They believed that such complete people were healthier and stronger and would help to regenerate the Spanish race and nation. To this end, Manuel Cossío, in conjunction with other British-educated teachers at the ILE, introduced various games to the school in the 1880s such as paper chase, rounders, and football.⁵⁶ Cossío even brought in a member of the British diplomatic corps, Stewart Henbest Capper,⁵⁷ to help teach football at the school. Regular Wednesday and

⁵⁶ Ricardo Rubio, "Los juegos corporales en la educación," *BILE* 17 (1893).

⁵⁷ As mentioned in chapter 1, the Englishman's name is often confused in the Spanish sources. The correct name is Stewart Henbest Capper who went to have a distinguished career as an architect in Great Britain and Canada.

Sunday games developed among the students that were refereed by several teachers and they began playing at regular fields that were later used by the early football clubs, such as Madrid F.C.'s early home Chamartín.

From this simple beginning in the late 1880s, students of the ILE began to learn and enjoy football for the first time. These students provided a base of interested people from which the sport grew and brought in new participants. As students graduated from the ILE, an informal society dedicated to football gradually developed under the name Foot-Ball Sky. Foot-Ball Sky was initiated under the leadership of a Swiss man named Paul Heubi and first organized regular games in 1897.⁵⁸ Although it was never officially registered with the civil government as a society, Foot-Ball Club Sky organized games for years after its initial foundation. The club played at a variety of pitches, including fields at El Pardo and later Moncloa. Moncloa at the time was an underdeveloped section northwest of the city with plenty of open space on which to play football. The El Pardo neighborhood was in the same general area and abutted the royal palace of the same name and some of the most exclusive suburbs in Madrid. The original president of the new organization was the polo enthusiast Luis Bermejillo and the Count of Quinta de la Enjarada (who acted as treasurer). These two lent aristocratic legitimacy to the group, although the true elite never became captivated by the new sport.

⁵⁸ Manuel Rosón [pseud. Eme Erre], *Historia desapasionada del "Athletic" (Hoy, "Club Atlético") por un apasionado del "Madrid" (1902-1948)* (Madrid: Ríos Rosas, 1948), 18-19.

Most of the players were ex-students and teachers at the ILE, but with time the membership branched out and regular meetings were held at a bar named El Aguila on calle Serrano. This again placed the new football club's members in the best neighborhoods, in this case the wealth *barrio* Salamanca in eastern Madrid. Included among the early players were brothers Julian and Bernardo Palacios, the owners of a significant publishing company named Artes Gráficas, and Manuel Rodríguez Arzuaga, an alumni of the ILE who had traveled around Europe and played rugby in France and football in Britain.⁵⁹ Rodríguez Arzuaga was one of Spain's first serious sportsmen and a model of the amateur athletic ideal. He saw football as a direct means of regenerating the country, helped the sport develop within the ILE, and later became an ardent opponent of professionalism because it destroyed football's hygienic benefits. Rodríguez Arzuaga also brought several of his friends into the organization, such as Natalio Rivas, a lawyer and Liberal politician who worked closely with Segismundo Moret and reaffirmed the clubs early ties to the Liberal party

In 1900, Foot-Ball Sky remained the main team in Madrid, but in that year it finally began to fracture as the number of people interested in the sport grew and the splinter groups established the first official football societies in the city. Part of the membership followed the team captain, Señor Giralt, and established a team called Español de Madrid while others continued as Football Sky for a short period. The majority of the membership, however, followed Julián Palacios and established a team

⁵⁹ Ángel Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid en la historia de España* (Madrid: Taurus, 2002), 20.

called Madrid Football Club. Palacios gained his leadership role largely because he owned an important graphic arts company in the city, Artes Gráficas, that was one of the first publishing houses to start printing large numbers of images in their magazines. Julian Palacios and the company gained its reputation by collaborating with one of the most important bullfighting publications in Madrid, *La Lidia*, which became the first such periodical to use large numbers of pictures. The advantage made Palacios an ideal leader with experience in the consumer world of bullfighting and a publishing house to use to promote the new football club, so his branch of Foot-Ball Sky quickly came to dominate.⁶⁰

It took two more years for the society to be officially established, however. Finally, in March 1902 Julián Palacios organized a general assembly of the club and the members decided to legalize the football society roughly two years after their rivals in Bilbao and Barcelona. They established an organizing committee on March 6 headed by a new president named Juan Padrós Rubio, and by April 18 the new committee wrote out the rules and statutes for the new club and submitted it to the civil government of Madrid. They received a rapid response and on April 22, Madrid F.C. became an officially recognized society in accord with the 1887 Ley de Asociaciones, the day recognized as the foundation of Real Madrid F.C..⁶¹ The club promptly created rules for the team, establishing fifteen as the minimum age, charging two pesetas a month for

⁶⁰ *Heraldo de Sport*, 8 March 1902.

⁶¹ The first board of directors for Madrid F.C. were; President: Juan Padrós Rubio, Vice-President: Enrique Varela, Secretary: Manuel Mendiá, Treasurer: José de Gorostizaga, Vocals: Antonio, G. Nerya, Mario Giralt, Carlos Mertens, Alvaro Spottorno, and Arturo Meléndez. *RFEF*, 25.

membership, and an entrance fee of five pesetas.⁶² Club officers were to be elected annually, memberships granted the right to play recreationally with the club, and rules of play were established from the 1901-02 English Football Association, making it very clear where they drew their inspiration from. They established a new field on the Avenida de la Plaza de Toros and began using a bar down the street from the field, La Taurina, as their local headquarters. The move marked a shift from the high-class Salamanca neighborhood to the lower-middle class and upper-working class neighborhood of La Guindelera. This marked a definite shift towards the lower middle class as a market for football as early as 1902

Madrid F.C.'s foundation also caused a shift of power among the teams members. The Palacios brothers faded from a leadership role in the new, official Madrid F.C. and were replaced by a new set of brothers, Juan and Carlos Padrós, who owned a local shoe store. Juan Padrós then aggressively promoted the club over the subsequent four months. On May 1, he organized an early official match against a local team called New Foot-Ball Club on May 2 at the Madrid Hippodrome that drew around a thousand curious onlookers. Padrós then organized a national tournament to be part of the celebrations and festivals surrounding the crowing of Alfonso XIII as he came of age on May 17.⁶³ This got the attention and support of the royal family, the Duke of Sesto (President of the aristocratic Soceidad de Carreras y Polo) and also of the Liberal, modernizing mayor of Madrid, Alberto Aguilera, who gave “una magnifica copa de

⁶² Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 26, 36.

⁶³ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 25-28.

plata” for the champion of the small tournament.⁶⁴ The first match kicked off at the Hippodrome on May 13 and produced a new spectacle in the capital city with, appropriately enough, a match between Madrid F.C. and F.C. Barcelona. In attendance were Alberto Aguilera, the British ambassador, many upper-class women, and the local press exaggeratedly claimed two thousand spectators.⁶⁵ Two hundred chairs were placed around the field that people were charged 10 to 25 céntimos to use and everyone standing was allowed to watch for free. Despite the fairly low price for chairs, the event was clearly a bourgeois social outing because the Hippodromo was located well into the northern section of the city where there was no public transportation at all. As the quote below describes, instead the field was surrounded by a wave of affluence symbolized by the cars and horse carriages of the wealthy attendees.

The tournament ended two days later on May 15, having stirred up significant interest across the city. As the local newspaper, *Heraldo de Sport* later wrote:

...por esa causa el público, que ya en días anteriores había acudido en gran número a presenciar los encuentros eliminatorios, fue tan numeroso que era poco menos que imposible transitar por los alrededores del campo, por la afluencia de coches, automóviles y caballos. Excusado es decir que el bello sexo dominaba en todos los sentidos de la palabra, y que también aplaudió con verdadero entusiasmo a los vencedores del partido, que son los que han obtenido la copa del Ayuntamiento.⁶⁶

The tournament raised football’s public profile, launched the sport in Madrid, and provided a forum for young men to impress the young ladies in the crowd. For the next

⁶⁴ Un Veterano, *40 años de historia del Madrid F.C. 1900-1940* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso: Publicaciones Deportivas no 1.1940), 17.

⁶⁵ The real number was closer to half of that.

⁶⁶ *Heraldo de Sport* (Madrid), 24 May 1902.

tournament in 1903, King Alfonso agreed to donate a cup himself- turning the competition into the Copa del Rey and attendance at the final match jumped from less than two thousand the first year to five thousand.⁶⁷ A new entertainment was born in capital and numbers would only grow from there.

Between 1900 and 1910, the sport gradually expanded from a curiosity to a regular event and Madrid F.C. began to draw the city's educated middle-class into the growing club. José Angel Berraondo, the founder and first captain of Real Sociedad de San Sebastián came to Madrid soon after he returned to Spain and played for Madrid F.C. for several years. Pedro Parages, a young student and later club leader, came to Madrid in 1902 and joined the society that became a central part of his life. Similarly, the brothers Adolfo and Vicente Álvarez Buylla Lozana had come to Madrid by the end of the decade and become regular participants in the team. They were both connected to the ILE and Adolfo had embraced Krausist ideas, published an article on the athletics in the *BILE* back in 1889, taught at the University of Oviedo, and became a Liberal politician. He arrived in Madrid in 1903 where he played football with Madrid F.C. until 1911; his brother arrived in 1908 and played with the club as well.⁶⁸ Clearly, Madrid F.C. remained a middle-class preserve. The Madrid elite generally choose more exclusive activities, like car racing, for their own conspicuous consumption and very few aristocrats participated after the first few years of Madrid F.C.'s existence, while the working class remained on the fringes of the sport. The club, therefore, primarily

⁶⁷ Ibérico Europa de Ediciones, *Historia de la Copa* (Madrid: Ibérico Europa de Ediciones, 1973), Fascículo 1, 6-7.

⁶⁸ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 20.

included members of the educated middle class of white collar workers who saw it as a means of regeneration as well as a social organization that defined them as above the working classes of the city.

Foundation of Atlético de Madrid

The ILE, Madrid Sky, and Real Madrid F.C. were not, however, the only avenue through which football was introduced into Madrid. More so than any other region of Spain, there was a significant Basque community that had developed in the national capital. Far more than the Catalans, Basque entrepreneurs over the eighteenth and nineteenth century had established trade connections, bank branches, and government connections between the Madrid and the Basque country. By the nineteenth century, these connections produced a significant Basque community in the capital city that lived in concentrated neighborhoods just like any immigrant group that moved to the growing cities all over Europe and North America, although financially better off.⁶⁹ Naturally, the *madrileño* Basques still had close family connections to their homeland and Bilbao in particular. This community was bolstered by significant numbers of younger temporary transplants living in Madrid for school or working as junior members in company offices before returning home. These communications and the fluidity of the population between the two regions meant that many members of the Basque community in Madrid had already been introduced to football at home. They carried

⁶⁹ Jesus Cruz, *Gentlemen, Bourgeois, and Revolutionaries: Political Change and Cultural Persistence among the Spanish Dominant Groups, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

their interest in the new sport with them to Madrid and taught it to their Basque brethren in the city.

The great motivation for organizing a team was the first national cup tournament held in Madrid in 1902. As has been discussed already, the combination of Bilbao F.C. and Athletic Club under the name Bizcaya F.C. won the first cup and brought it back to Bilbao. This first victory filled not only Bilbao, but also the Basque community in Madrid with great pride, especially after Bizcaya repeated its victory in 1903. The enthusiasm of the second experience led local students to organize their own society in the capital whose goal they announced in the local review *Arte y Sport* as being a “delegación en Madrid para los hijos de Bilbao aquí residentes.”⁷⁰ They met at the Sociedad Vasco-Navarra de Madrid (the central institution of the Basque community within the city) on April 26, 1903 and registered Athletic de Madrid as a branch society of the main club in Bilbao.⁷¹ The two societies were in fact so intertwined that several members of the 1903 champions were actually from Madrid, not Bilbao. As *Arte y Sport* put it on November 30, 1904 “este Club está unido al Athletic de Bilbao, actual campeón de España.”⁷² The *socios* of Athletic de Madrid were given the same rights and responsibilities as the members of the Athletic de Bilbao and they even paid the same dues of 2.50 pesetas a month. From 1903 until 1907, the Madrid society was run by president Eduardo de Acha who kept ties with Bilbao regularly and maintained the

⁷⁰ Un Veterano, *Historial del Athletic Aviación Club 1903-1940* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso: Publicaciones Deportivas, December 1940), 3.

⁷¹ The first board of directors for Athletic de Madrid was; President: Enrique Allende, Vice-President: Juan Zabala, Secretary: Eduardo Acha, Treasurer: Enrique Goiri, Vice-Secretary: Juan Peña. *RFEF*, 23.

⁷² *Arte y Sport* (Madrid) 30 November 1904.

joint organization. Gradually, however, as the Madrid club grew and regulation within the sport increased, unity between clubs in two different cities became difficult. In November 1906, Acha petitioned to make Athletic de Madrid an official and independent society through his secretary Abdón de Alaiza, although it remained connected to its parent organization.⁷³ On February 20, 1907, official recognition came back from the civil government and Madrid F.C. had its local “eternal rival.”

Nonetheless, even the officially founded Madrid society still saw itself as connected to the mother club in Bilbao. Acha and the other founders of the society even wrote this into the original “Reglamento de la Asociación ‘Athletic Club’ de Madrid.” The first rule of the club stated “que la Sociedad será una Sucursal del ‘Athletic Club’ de Bilbao” and that it would have the same rules and monthly dues as the mother society.⁷⁴ The Reglamento organized the club in great detail, establishing five types of members for the new society, protectors, honorary, founders of number, players, and accidentals or temporary members. Interestingly, most government employees and military officers were limited to being accidental members without a vote in the society. This allowed them to participate in and support the club, but reserved control for its Basque founders.

Athletic de Madrid also quickly became more than just a football club. Almost immediately after its foundation in 1903, the society developed a wide variety of

⁷³ Veterano, *Aviación*, 10.

⁷⁴ Manuel Rosón, *Historia desapasionada*, 25-32. The full text of Athletic de Madrid’s original rules and regulations are reprinted in a massive footnote in this work and provide an interesting insight into the goals of the new society.

branches and activities that turned it into a cultural center for the entire Basque community in Madrid. For example, in 1903 Athletic introduced the first footrace in the city under the name Copa Rodríguez Arzuaga.⁷⁵ For years afterward this was an annual event that drew regular participants from the Sociedad Gimnástica Española and every other athletic society in the city. By the 1910s, Athletic became the most important center for tennis in Madrid and even included sections dedicated to polo, track and field, rugby, Basque pelota (of course), a ladies section in which wives and daughters mostly played tennis, and even a group interested in American baseball.

The new club began playing matches at the field of Ronda de Vallecas near what is today Avenida de Menéndez Pelayo. This location was in southern Madrid, on the opposite side of the city from the Hippodrome, and in a working-class neighborhood which all contrast the northern, middle-class or better neighborhoods where the ILE and Madrid F.C. fields were located. With some limited improvements, Ronda de Vallecas became one of the best early football pitches in the city and was shared with other early clubs like Iberia F.C. until Athletic built a real stadium in 1913. In 1907 Athletic began playing occasional matches with the students of the three Castilian military academies based in Guadalajara, Toledo, and Segovia where football was becoming popular and military gymnastics had a longer tradition. The next year, 1908, saw the introduction of a new sub-captain for the second team, Julián Ruete. Ruete would later become one of

⁷⁵ Veterano, *Aviación*, 13-17.

the most important leaders of the club in the 1910s and 1920s and like so many owners and presidents in the 1920s, he began as a player in the first age of football.

Finally, just like teams in Barcelona and Bilbao, Madrid F.C. and Athletic de Madrid were only the largest and most permanent clubs that appeared in Madrid. Over the course of the first decade of the century several dozen smaller clubs that were mentioned in the city's different sporting publications began competing. By 1904, there were clubs called Iberia, Madrid, Moderno, Español de Madrid, Gran Viá, Sport, Amicale, and Moncloa who competed to represent the city. Some, like Moncloa, maintained their own fields while others used whatever open space was available. As a group the teams established the Federación Madrileña de Clubs de Fútbol in 1902 and they ran an annual city championship in the city, although Madrid F.C. and Athletic de Madrid perennially dominated the competition.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the story of early football in Madrid can largely be restricted to the two major clubs as no other group managed to organize the resources to challenge them until the 1910s.

Other Areas

Finally, it must be noted that football was not limited to these four areas of the country alone. During the first decade of the twentieth century, football gradually began to spring up all over the nation in every significant urban area although the smaller populations of regional cities limited the sport's impact. In particular, the

⁷⁶ Veterano, *Madrid F.C.*, 22.

smaller cities of Galicia and Asturias quickly established their own football societies. In the provinces, football provided a way to symbolize the growing political and cultural regional identities that were developing. Also, in areas like Oviedo and Valencia there was a strong ILE influence as well that brought the game to those cities. In 1901, the beginnings of the club that became Deportivo de La Coruña were established and in 1903 Celta de Vigo, Gijón Sport Club, and Unión Escolar Oviedo were set up in their respective cities.⁷⁷ As mentioned earlier, Valencia developed its own sporting traditions as did most of the industrial towns around Catalonia and even the ancient cities of Castile were introduced to the foreign sport by military academies and other connections with the larger world.

By the end of the decade, the combination of minor economic problems and the limited size of the Spanish, urban bourgeoisie caused football club memberships all over the Spain to stagnate. As the novelty of football wore off and its social prestige fell off as well, many members of the upper middle classes, such as factory owners and those aspiring to the aristocracy, withdrew from the sport and put their time into more expensive pursuits like auto racing. This was a common development and is mirrored in Britain where public school boys became increasingly interested in rugby, cricket, and school-specific codes of football as the mainline football world became the realm of working-class professional athletes. Clubs in Barcelona, Bilbao, and Madrid often disbanded formally or just quietly ceased to compete. But it did not matter, because

⁷⁷ Soto Barrera, *Historia del fútbol*, 11.

football had established a beachhead in Spain and it would not be turned back. Rather than disbanding, many clubs responded to the economic pressure by consolidating into two or three major teams per city. Consolidated teams allowed resources to be pooled, competition to continue, and eventually the first stadiums to be built. They emphasized the goal of economic success and commercialism while at the same time reducing the number of players who actively participated in the games. For the first time, differences appeared between players and club members and the sport evolved from groups of friends into a form of mass entertainment. This set up a struggle over what the sport's identity should be, middle class and participatory or working class and mass entertainment. The battle between the two started in the 1910s, raged through the 1920s, and radically changed football from a middle-class activity to a working-class entertainment.

Chapter Four:

The 1910s and the Age of Amateurism

During the first decade of the twentieth century, various foreigners and Spaniards who had traveled to Britain learned football and introduced it to Spain. Once introduced to the nation's already vibrant and growing athletic communities, football rapidly became a popular activity among the Spanish urban middle classes of Barcelona, the Basque Country, and Madrid. Football clubs were established, tournaments were organized, and youths began dreaming of impressing their friends with exploits on the pitch. Clubs prior to 1910 were still essentially groups of middle-class friends playing a game for fun. Every member expected to play personally and paid for his own equipment and travel expenses. By 1910, however, this began to limit the sport's expansion as the country's small professional middle classes became saturated and something had to change for growth to continue.

Over the course of the 1910s, this small scale organization changed forever. First, between 1907 and 1910 the Spanish economy experienced a short recession that temporarily reduced disposable incomes and drew attention away from athletic activities. Football clubs across the country folded, while others were forced to combine with their neighbors to survive financially. After the recession, these larger

and more fiscally conscious societies had the resources to expand in every direction in an economy that was increasingly affluent and successful. During the 1910s, Spain's industries and economy expanded, especially between 1914 and 1918 when neutrality in World War I allowed the Spanish merchants to trade war commodities with both sides. This produced an expanding economy in which the increasingly affluent members of all classes could spend their money.

In this positive economic climate, football became a regular part of Spanish culture. The sport's scope remained limited, but it ceased to be an exclusively middle-class activity and developed working-class interest and participation for the first time. This expansion of popularity can be traced through a variety of changes clubs experienced during the decade including increasing membership rolls, attendance figures, and the numbers of clubs themselves. At the same time, the first stadiums were built to accommodate paying fans, media attention dramatically increased, and sports journalism became an accredited profession. Football even produced its first regionally known stars who were celebrities in their own right and ticket-window draws, despite officially remaining amateurs.

To make this expansion possible, the members of the football community had to turn football matches into regulated spectacles, so that the public knew what they were buying with their money. To make this possible, the clubs established regional and national governing bodies and fought out what powers those groups would have over the course of the decade. These new federations created impartial referee organizations

that insured that competition on the pitch was fair and uncorrupted. Beyond building federations, clubs had to develop identities of their own that people could identify and become emotionally involved with. Such identification allowed for mass interest and the creation of small “imagined communities” for the supporters of each club. To do this, teams invented traditions that marked them as the representatives of regions, neighborhoods, and social classes through rivalries, colors, flags, and other symbols and created a mass audience for the first time. These changes provided the football world with an organizational foundation that made gradual growth possible in the 1910s and set the stage for exponential expansion in 1920s. The gradual encroachment of mass consumerism caused underlying structural changes, the old pedagogical arguments for sport and the amateur ideal of participation continued to dominate. While on-field play remained the exclusive preserve of the middle classes, workers became accepted as vicarious observers into a world they were not yet really part of.

Increasing Participation and Economic Development

The most important change football experienced during the 1910s was the sheer increase in the number of people participating. Over the course of the decade, more teams were founded, more members joined each club, and more youths played the sport in the streets and fields across the country. This growth can be measured in a variety of ways and brought numerous changes to Spanish popular culture. It translated into larger attendance figures and larger profits brought in from matches, but this increase

only happened gradually. The rising attendance numbers also mark the increasing participation of the working class that first became interested in football in industrial areas. Their participation would become increasingly important after the eight hour work week was established in 1919, providing workers with more time to enjoy mass spectacles.¹ In the years prior to 1910, the sport stagnated as both economic recession and the limited size of the Spanish urban middle-class placed a brake on its expansion. Some clubs folded and many more merged together to survive. Essentially, at the beginning of the decade the clubs and players still had to search for money to pay for equipment and travel and their participation frequently lost them money. To provide some specific examples, at the beginning of the decade Athletic de Bilbao made an early trip to the French town of Bordeaux across the Pyrenees for a match. After paying train fares in both Spain and France and the team's hotel in Bordeaux, the club ended up losing two hundred and seventy three pesetas during the trip, despite its income from the match.² Similarly, in 1908 F.C. Barcelona fell to thirty-eight members, almost folded, and was only saved by its foreign, quasi-Protestant, original founder Hans Gamper, while other clubs like F.C. Catalá disbanded and liquidated their assets.³ Football at the time, therefore, depended almost entirely on participant funding and was subject to the rising and falling fortunes of the educated professionals and middle-class Europeanizers across the country.

¹ Juan Pable Fusi, *Un siglo de España: la cultural* (Madrid, Marcial Pons, 1999), 56-57.

² José Maria Mateos, *Los cincuenta años de Atlético de Bilbao 1898-1948* (Bilbao: 1948), 17-18.

³ Some sources list Barcelona as having sixty-eight *socios* in 1908. That number is their total at the end of the year, but thirty eight was the low point in membership at the meeting.

Over the course of the decade, however, this fiscal situation gradually improved for clubs across the country. As early as 1915-16, Athletic de Bilbao had a much rosier financial picture. In that year, the society brought in 30,661 pesetas from the monthly fees of *socios* and 20,303 pesetas from matches including 6,877 pesetas in one day from the championship against rival Real Sociedad.⁴ Matches that profitable were few and far between, but such profits were a far cry from the losses of only five years earlier. While Athletic began with only twenty-four members in 1900, by 1914 it had eighty-seven and by the end of the 1915-16 season the number had risen to one hundred and twelve.⁵ Even more impressively, membership numbers at F.C. Barcelona increased by more than one hundred a year for the entire decade. By 1920, Barça claimed a massive three thousand five hundred and seventy four *socios* paying membership dues and the club played forty seven matches that year.⁶ These membership numbers are somewhat suspect because the club tended to inflate its member rolls, but any adjustment would remain impressive compared to the thirty-eight *socios* of 1908. Madrid F.C. saw similar growth that turned the club into an economically viable business. Over the 1912-13 season, Madrid averaged two hundred and fifty two paying spectators per match, which brought in a total income of 3,881.20 pesetas over the season.⁷ Seven years later, the

⁴ Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 34.

⁵ Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 34.

⁶ José L. Lasplazas and Carlos Pardo, *El Barcelona C.F. hacia su medio siglo de historia* (Madrid: Ediciones Alonso: Publicaciones Deportivas no 9. May 1941), 92-93.

⁷ Ángel Bahamonde Magro, *El Real Madrid: en la historia de España* (Madrid: Taurus, 2002), 53-4. On page 53, Bahamonde has put together a wonderfully complete table listing number of matches, season attendance, per match attendance, annual income, per match income, and price per spectator. The table ranges from the 1912-13 season to the 1925-26 season and his sources are the archived accounting records of Real Madrid.

club's average attendance was one thousand three hundred and eighty nine and their total income from ticket sales rose to 21,303.26 pesetas. Although the increase in net income varied significantly from year to year, depending on the number of matches played and foreign visitors attracted, after 1916 Madrid F.C. never again averaged less than one thousand spectators a match and a year later the club reached the milestone of five-hundred dues paying *socios*. In Spain's three largest cities, therefore, the interest and income of the most important football clubs increased dramatically over the decade and reached significant numbers.

The limits that still constrained football must be noted because observers at the time who sought to promote and expand the sport regularly exaggerated exactly how much it grew. The best illustration of this is the difference between newspaper estimates and real attendance figures because free tickets for club members and promotions meant that paid ticket sales were frequently far below actual attendance. Newspapers regularly reported "huge attendances" and "enormous crowds" to stir up enthusiasm when the reality was usually on a far smaller scale. Ángel Bahamonde has illustrated this difference through the example of several of Real Madrid's matches at mid-decade. On January 2, 1914, *ABC* reported a "*público numerosísimo*" for a match between Madrid and Benfica de Lisboa, but the actual number of tickets sold was only one hundred and five (although presumably many were given out to *socios* and to draw a crowd).⁸ Similarly, a match between Madrid F.C. and Athletic de Bilbao on January

⁸ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 51.

7, 1917 drew the reasonably strong attendance of 2,728, but a journalist covering the match claimed in his article that there were eight thousand people there. In other words, the sport was drawing more interest and expanding, but the amount of expansion and change in the 1910s had definite limits and was not as great as many newspaper writers (who also wrote most of the early club histories) suggested.

By the end of the decade, some groups were caught between fiscal solvency and bankruptcy, and took the extreme step of petitioning the already financially-strapped government for money. They argued that they needed public funds to provide the best services possible for fans and visiting clubs alike and that providing quality support for athletics was in the nation's interest. One of the best examples of this was the Federación de Sociedades Deportivas (of Barcelona) which petitioned the Minister of Hacienda in December 1917.⁹ The FSD's president discussed in depth the services that he believed his organization rendered to the nation such as physically training the children of Catalonia and constructing fields and modern facilities including stands, changing rooms, showers, bathrooms, and everything else needed to provide safe public attractions. Further, they honorably hosted visiting teams from all over Europe (whose visits should be handled particularly well since most of the visitors were coming from war torn countries). In the end, the committee asked the government for some subvention (such as the 15,000 pesetas given them by the city of Barcelona) to help defray the cost of all the "services" they rendered. They justified this with the

⁹ "Reclamación Justa," *Heraldo Deportivo* 3, no. 94, 25 December 1917, 438-39. *Heraldo Deportivo* used two full pages to reprint the entire text of this petition by the Catalan federation and its president Narciso Deop. It is an interesting statement of why the clubs felt they were doing a service to the nation.

connection between physical education and regeneration, arguing that by promoting athletics and providing facilities for it the club was physically regenerating the nation. A little bit later, the Real Sociedad Gimnástica Española (RSGE) also petitioned the government for a subsidy on the grounds of the services they provided to the nation. Starting in 1924, the RSGE received 1,500 pesetas annually (and soon after it was raised to 2,000) from the Ministry of Public Instruction to help support their efforts to provide as many of Madrid's population as possible with physical education programs.¹⁰ In a few areas, then, athletic organizations gradually obtained subsidies from the government to sustain regulatory bodies, such as regional federations, whose goal was the good of the sport and the larger ideal of regeneration.

Not only did finances improve over the decade, but the number of clubs rose dramatically, as a brief illustration dealing with Vizcaya and Catalonia alone makes clear. By 1909 in the Basque Country, Athletic de Bilbao, Arenas de Gauchó, Club Ciclista de San Sebastián (soon to be Real Sociedad), and Racing de Irún were the only important clubs and the whole area was administered by the Federación Norte. In comparison, when the Norte divided into two federations (the Vizcayan and the Guipuzcoana) in 1917 the clubs involved were: Arenas, Deportivo Portugalete, Deportivo Cantabria, Racing Club, Rolando Club, Barreda Sport, Erandio, Santander F.C., Elexalde, Esperanza de Santander, Siempre Adelante de Santander, Irrintzi, Fortuna, Duesto, Ariñ Sport, Athletic, Acero F.C., Baracaldo F.C., Vizcaya Union,

¹⁰ Pompeyo Sevilla Gómez, *Medio siglo de la Real Sociedad Gimnástica Española (1887-1937)* (Madrid: Silverio Aguirre, 1951), 35.

Arrapazenbazaitut, Real Sociedad, Real Unión de Irún, Esperanza, Club Deportivo Irunés, Racing de San Sebastián, Luchana, Ariñ de Eiber, Old Boy's, and Español (de Bilbao).¹¹ These clubs were divided into two divisions that held separate championships, and all of them were represented and considered when changes were made to the regional federation. Significantly, many of these clubs like Duesto, Acero F.C. and Baracaldo F.C. represented industrial areas, where football was becoming popular among the industrial working class. Similarly, in Catalonia the number of teams participating grew rapidly over the decade and there were two divisions of participants by 1920. The main clubs included F.C. Barcelona, Español, Jupiter, Sans, Badalona, Athletic de Sabadell, Sabadell F.C., Club Gimnástica de Tarragona, Catalá (a different version from the 1900 Catalá), l'Avenç, Gimnàstica A.E.P., Palamós, Catalònia, Europa Esportiu, Manresa, Mataró, Vilassar, Catalunya, Sarrià, T.B.H., and Esparta and many more in lesser divisions. Just as in Vizcaya, this list includes representatives from most of the industrial towns around Catalonia and several of Barcelona's larger neighborhoods as well, such as Sabadell, Manresa, Tarragona, Badalona, and Sans. Football was gradually becoming an activity of the working class, not the middle class alone. Quite simply, times had changed and the sport was bigger than it had ever been before and this transition would have serious consequences for the sport's organization.

¹¹ "Fútbol," *Heraldo Deportivo* 4, no. 117, 15 August 1918, 262.

As attendance and club numbers increased, the cost of attending a football match rose as well to balance each club's increasing financial investments and marking their transition into capitalist ventures. With greater drawing power, ticket pricing developed beyond a simple general charge for entrance or a chair to sit on around the sidelines. The first grandstands were built and distinct areas developed with different entrance fees that separated fans of varied social levels both at the field and on train rides to the stadium. In 1911, matches at the newly built fields of Jolaseta in Bilbao included a complex breakdown of fees. Seats in the *tribuna* with a first class train ticket cost 3.50 pesetas, while *tribuna* seats with a second class ticket were 3 pesetas.¹² The next step down were *billetes de preferencia* with first-class train tickets for 2.90 pesetas and second-class ones for 2.50, and seats in the general section ran 2 and 1.60 pesetas with their respective train tickets. Finally, entries without train tickets cost 2.30 for the *tribuna*, 1.75 for *preferencia*, y 0.86 for entry into general seating. Admittedly, Athletic de Bilbao was a leader in this area, but other clubs and cities followed their model. This system of differentiated prices marked the varied elite, middle-class, and working class social levels attending matches. Similarly, the packaging of rail and entrance tickets emphasizes how routine the marketing tactic of collaboration between football and railroad companies had become as early as 1911. Bilbao was an expanding city and the organization of transportation to matches reflected the changes urbanization was bringing to both Bilbao and other cities across Spain. Cities were no longer so small

¹² Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 21.

that people could easily walk to their destinations and these larger numbers necessitated public transportation systems for the first time. Football clubs helped to spur those developments and established connections with rail companies that provided sure markets for entrepreneurs who invested in transportation industries.

In the national capital, Madrid F.C. developed two price distinctions for its matches, *preferencia* and general, and the club kept the prices of its general seating within a range that the working class could afford. Between 1912 and 1920, the prices for tickets to the *preferencia* rose from 77 *céntimos* to 1.69 pesetas while the general entrance started as only 33 *céntimos* and rose to 87 *céntimos*.¹³ Although prices increased slightly more for general admission than for *preferencia*, Madrid kept the price of general entrance roughly equivalent to one hour of work for a skilled worker, making sure that the general public could afford their matches.

By mid-decade, football matches were drawing enough fans to be deemed a risk to public order on numerous occasions across Spain. At a match between Athletic and Arenas de Guecho in 1916, the crowd rushed the field in protest over a referee's decision and the match had to be suspended. At the match replay, the local Guardia Civil had to forcibly hold them back from another invasion of the pitch.¹⁴ That same year a regional final between Athletic de Bilbao and Real Sociedad, located at the neutral site of Irún's Amate field, was called off by the civil governor because of "el

¹³ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 58.

¹⁴ *San Mamés, la catedral* (Bilbao: Internacional Book Creation, 1982), 86-87.

clima de pasión que se había fomentado por la prensa” before the match.¹⁵ In 1918, similar problems developed in Barcelona where heated rivalries within the city stoked the flames of the fans’ passions for the first time. In that year, F.C. Barcelona and Español met in the finals of the Catalan championship and the result was explosive. As José Lasplazas, a prominent journalist at the time, wrote “es—como todas las que oponen en aquellos tiempos a los eternos rivales—una lucha dura, tantos discutidos e invasiones del pública al terreno de juego... Es el tiempo de la ‘peñas’ apasionadas, de ‘hinchas’ que buscan las calles solitarias para pelear.”¹⁶ This description calls to mind images of modern fans mobbing the streets and fights breaking out, yet it was only 1918. It is also hard not to read Lasplazas’s words without picturing the more typical image of Barcelona at that time, anarchist *pistoleros* and undercover government policemen fighting out their own battles on the streets of the same city. The passion of fans and political dissidence, therefore, came to be expressed through a similar form of mass demonstration focused on certain squares and prone to violent outburst. This tradition continues today, with Madrid providing a seminal example. When Real Madrid F.C. or Atlético de Madrid achieve some other important success, their fans flock to Plaza de Cebeles or Plaza de Neptuno, respectively, on the Paseo del Prado and hold mass celebrations that have to be broken up by the police.

Nor did this level of interest only exist in the three largest cities. In Galicia, the early rivalry between Deportivo de la Coruña, Celta de Vigo, and Fortuna de Vigo also

¹⁵ Ibérico Europa de Ediciones (IEE), *Historia de la Copa* (Madrid: Ibérico Europa de Ediciones, 1973), 57.

¹⁶ Lasplazas, *Barcelona*, 49-50.

became a threat to the public order. As early as 1916, several matches between the first two clubs led their fans to become dangerously violent and it was announced that “la repercusión de los incidentes de La Coruña fue tal que el gobernador civil de la provincia decidió la suspensión de estos encuentros de rivalidad regional.”¹⁷ The ban did not last very long and the teams simply played an unofficial match to avoid governmental interference (almost like two gangs taking their fight underground to avoid the authorities). Similarly, the 1919 Galician championship was marked by the absence of Fortuna de Vigo, which was banned from participating in official matches for several months due to constant public disturbances surrounding their matches. These problems with fans and the intervention of the civil authorities to maintain order marked a critical mass that football was reaching even in the country’s smaller cities. In both good and bad ways, the sport was forcing itself into mainstream culture as it never had before.

Stadiums

A natural corollary to football’s rising interest and fan support was the need for larger structures to house fans and control attendance. This essentially made the 1910s the first age of football stadium building in Spain. The idea of building large outdoor arenas was not that novel in Spain because every significant city already had a

¹⁷ Carlos Fernández Santander, *Historia del Real Club Deportivo de La Coruña (1906-1999)* (La Coruña: Librería Arenas, 1999), 19-21.

permanent bullring.¹⁸ Football quickly caught up to bullfighting, however, and by 1915 every important club across Spain had some sort of stadium. The basic requirement for these new edifices was to provide a closed-off area in which the club could control attendance so that it could charge a fee. The second main goal was to establish different sections within the stadium and provide certain areas with better accommodations for which teams could charge higher prices, generally a *tribuna* and/or *preferencia*. The *tribuna* usually consisted of a grandstand with raised, shaded seats and a genteel audience, while the *preferencia* were seats along the sideline around the *tribuna* and open to the sun. Finally, general entrance tickets often did not include seats at all, usually allowed the spectator to watch the match from the ends of the field or the side opposite the *tribuna* and *preferencia* and later developed into British-style terraces.

These divisions served two purposes for the clubs and were a logical extension of established cultural practices at bullfights, where seats were divided between *sol y sombra* (sun and shaded) seats to serve a similar purpose. First, multiple sections produced more expensive seating that increased a team's income per match. Second, the divided seating hindered the increasingly working-class fans from infringing on the distinction and enjoyment of the middle and upper class club members and attendees in the *tribuna*. This allowed some of the social distinction of football as a form of conspicuous consumption that had drawn people to it in the first decade of the century to continue in the 1910s and 1920s. The working-class fans were simply segregated

¹⁸ The authoritative work on bullfighting in Spain and its commercial development, such as the building of bullrings, is Adrian Shubert, *Death and Money in the Afternoon: A History of the Spanish Bullfight* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999).

from the middle-class organizers, members, and players who could afford the more expensive sections. Certainly, some social mixing did occur, but sectioned seating limited it as much as possible in the increasingly consumer sport.

As in other areas, Athletic de Bilbao led the football community and built two football stadiums in the first half of the 1910s to satisfy its rapidly increasing need. The club built the first, Jolaseta, for the 1911 national cup championship and it served adequately to host most of the nation's largest clubs at that early point. For the project Athletic de Bilbao hired the substantial construction firm Sociedad Terrenos de Neguri and the stadium included provisions for the complex ticket prices cited above.¹⁹ Almost immediately, however, it became clear that the club needed an even larger stadium to satisfy its growing fan base. The club held a special meeting of all *socios* on December 12, 1912, to ratify the building of a new stadium. The first step was to ask for money from the "prestigiosas socios del club [such as] don Braulio de Urigüen, don Luis de Arana Urigüen, don Alejandro de Acha, don Pedro [Ibarra] Mac-Mahón, don Julio de Egusquiza, don Ángel de Gorbeña, don José Antonio de Gáldiz y don Julio de Arteche."²⁰ Essentially, the directors asked the leading bankers and industrialists in the society for money both as a financial venture and so that those members themselves could be more effectively separated from the masses at matches. Soon, they established a fund-raising goal of 50,000 pesetas for the project, raised the money, and purchased land at the end of the Gran Vía in Bilbao next to the Asilo de San Mamés. The location

¹⁹ Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 21-22.

²⁰ Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 28-29.

was far enough out of Bilbao to remove the stadium from working-class neighborhoods and place it in a developing part of the city popular among the middle classes. It was also near a railroad line so that the masses could be easily (and temporarily) transported in. The club reaffirmed its regional identity by hiring a local architect, Manuel María Smith, to plan the stadium and work began.



Illustration 4.1 “San Mamés,” José Arrúe, 1915.

When construction started, the club held a public ceremony on January 20, 1913, attended by numerous players, such as the club’s star Pichichi, at which a local priest, Manuel Ortúzar, consecrated the field.²¹ Bringing in Ortúzar and the club’s best known players for a public consecration affirmed Athletic de Bilbao’s Catholicism and placed it within the traditions of the region. It also exhibited the social mores of the Bilbao elite and made clear that the club chose to maintain a connection with the city’s elite.

²¹ *San Mamés*, 62.

The stadium was completed in the summer of 1913 and the inaugural match at San Mamés was held on August 21, with the team's great striker Pichichi scoring the first goal to the appreciation of the crowd. In the end, the stadium cost 89,061 pesetas, a huge sum for the period that marks exactly how affluent the young football club and its leaders were. In many ways, the opening of San Mamés was a landmark for Spanish football. It was one of the first truly large football facilities, drew rave reviews across the country, and brought legitimacy to the sport in a country where bullfighting dominated. Sports writers lauded the new field's features and compared it favorably to British football stadiums, the ultimate compliment at the time.²² José Maria Mateos wrote that:

El nuevo campo, ¿estupendo? Estupendo es poco. ¿Maravilloso? Maravilloso no me parece bastante. ¿Colosalísimo? Pueda que más sea ése el juicio que ha merecido el campo de football, que ayer inauguró el Athletic, a los millares y millares de personas, que se extendieron por graderías y paseos de aquel encantador jardín. Diógenes Orueta, el floricultor admirable, ha hecho allí un trabajo de gran artista y nos ha presentado una monada de campo.

Smith, el ingenioso arquitecto, ha sabido no sólo trazar unas líneas muy lindas, sino que lo ha llevado a la realidad. Lo ha dado vida, porque entre aquellos campos, parecía como que uno volvía a vivir.²³

The mayor of Bilbao sent a congratulatory telegram and King Alfonso XIII himself attended the inaugural match. This prestige produced the nickname that the stadium's current incarnation still holds today-- the "catedral de fútbol"-- and marked an important step in football's rising cultural importance.

²² *San Mamés*, 67-80.

²³ *San Mamés*, 67.

Although Bilbao led the way with the stadium of San Mamés, clubs in other regions also built their first substantial football fields in the 1910s, although in most cases true stadiums were not constructed until the 1920s. Curiously, while Barcelona was home to a large numbers of clubs and football fields, the city's teams did not built many significant stadiums in the 1910s. Instead, they tended to own only smaller grounds and shift from field to field more often than in Madrid or Bilbao because Barcelona had more geographical restrictions then the other two cities. Barcelona's middle-class neighborhoods were surrounded by hills extending out towards Montserrat, the flatter areas to the north and south were dominated by working-class neighborhoods, and the planned areas of the Eixample in the center of the city did not lend themselves to large stadiums. Español de Barcelona played for most of the 1910s at a relatively small field off calle Muntaner and did not build a significant stadium until 1923.²⁴ While F.C. Barcelona also made do with a small field until they built Las Corts, also in 1923, in the elite neighborhood of the same name. By the end of decade, however, plans were underway for the first large stadium in Barcelona. Led by the influential Baron Joan Antoni de Güell (son of Eusebi Güell, patron of architect Antoni Gaudi) and with the approval of Fransesc Cambó (the Lliga Regionalista politician who wanted to redevelop the Montjuic), a group named Stadium Club began holding meetings in 1919 and laid plans to build an Olympic-level stadium.²⁵ They continued their campaign in the 1920s and succeeded in building one of the first world-class

²⁴ José L. Laplazas and Carlos Pardo, *Historial del Real Club Deportivo Española* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso- Publicaciones Deportivas no. 11, 1941), 23,33.

²⁵ *Heraldo Deportivo* 5, no. 160, 25 October 1919, 416.

stadiums in Spain on the slopes of Montjuic. The stadium helped convert the old mountain whose crowning fort symbolized Castilian dominance into Barcelona's primary center for large sporting events and subsequent stadiums have stood on that site ever since.

In Madrid, clubs also built new stadiums for the first time to answer the rising demand by patrons. The most important was that of Madrid F.C., which played at the Campo de O'Donnell between 1910 and 1923 in the solid middle-class neighborhood east of the Retiro Park. Even by the standards of the day, it was a small field that only covered a three hundred meter square, but it only cost the club one thousand pesetas a year to rent and repeatedly expanded it to increase capacity. In the fall of 1912, Madrid F.C. reorganized O'Donnell for the first time to add a grandstand.²⁶ The new facilities included four hundred and ninety five seats in the *preferencia* and one thousand two hundred general entrance tickets, including two hundred specifically for *socios*.²⁷ The original entrance price for general seating was an affordable twenty céntimos that made occasional attendance possible for the working-class. The stadium subsequently received facelifts in 1914, 1916, and then again in the early 1920s.²⁸ By the time Real Madrid moved to Ciudad Lineal in 1923, O'Donnell had a capacity of 3,500 spectators that was better, but still needed to be larger. Other clubs in Madrid also built fields such as Athletic de Madrid (who opened their first field with controlled attendance on

²⁶ Luis Prados de la Plaza, *Real Madrid: Centenario* (Madrid: Sílex, 2001), 62-65.

²⁷ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 56.

²⁸ Ibid.

February 9, 1912) and the newly important Racing de Madrid, which also had its own premises by mid-decade.

On a smaller scale, clubs in other cities built their own fields and established many of the names that later became legendary in Spanish football. In La Coruña, Club Deportivo de la Sala Calvet (which received a royal title on February 5, 1909 and simplified its name to Real Club Deportivo de la Coruña) opened its first stadium on May 9, 1909.²⁹ Like Athletic de Bilbao, the club built on the outskirts of the city, where there was both open space and easy transportation. They built the field of Riazor next to the beach of the same name and, as with the stadium atop Montjuic in Barcelona, a stadium has stood there ever since. In San Sebastián, the 1909 national champion from the city, Club Ciclista, obtained and fitted out the field of Ondaretta. Only four years and a merger of the city's largest clubs brought the closing of Ondaretta in favor of the older fields at Atocha.³⁰ The now united Real Sociedad turned the fields of Atocha into a true stadium over the decade just as Madrid F.C. gradually expanded O'Donnell. By the 1920s, Atocha held significant seating, hosted numerous international matches, and became one of the most important stadiums in the country. In other areas, Real Unión de Irún built the field of Amute and in Gijón a local club established the grounds of El Molinón.³¹ In the south, Seville F.C. obtained a section of the Prado de San Sebastián next to the Circulo Mercantil in 1908 and established their first pitch, the Campo de

²⁹ Fernández Santander, *La Coruña*, 12.

³⁰ José J. Aranjuelo [pseud. Erostarbe], *Historial de la Real Sociedad de San Sebastián* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso: Publicaciones Deportivas no. 12, 1941), 26, 33, 43.

³¹ Alonso de Caso, *Fútbol: asociación y rugby* (Madrid: Biblioteca de Deportes- Calpe, 1924), 23.

Mercantil. As in Barcelona, Seville's stadium was related to grounds used for expositions and allowed the city to make use of such land when no expositions were going on. Developments were so informal that the club only charged fifteen céntimos per chair. By 1910, stands had been added with a "tribuna y sillas del terrizo veíanse llenas de distinguida concurrencia, y entre ellas descollaban bellísimas señoras y señoritas de nuestra buena sociedad, que contribuían al mayor realce de aquel cuadro, que sólo el pincel de la naturaleza puede formar."³² This emphasized that the *tribuna* and chairs next to the field helped bring in a middle-class or better audience that increasingly became part of the club's identity. Seville's local rival, Sevilla Balompíe (later Real Betis) established a second field in the city at Huerta de la Mariana in 1907. Then it built its own full stadium, the fields of Patronato Obrero, interestingly located across from the good neighborhood of Porvenir in 1918.³³ The name of this new field also emphasized that Betis was taking up a more working-class identity in comparison to Seville F.C.. Finally, Valencia joined in once enough people were persuaded to back a larger club within the city that took the name Valencia Foot-Ball Club in early 1919. The new organization opened the field of Algirós on December 7, 1919, in the neighborhood of the same name that was conveniently located in a somewhat isolated region of the city that was nonetheless close to downtown and connected by rail. The choice of location for Algirós, therefore, directly reflected the city's urbanization and

³² Arturo Otero, *Historial del Sevilla Club de Fútbol: 35 años de vida deportiva* (Madrid/Burgos: Ediciones Alonso: Publicaciones Deportivas no. 8, 1941), 11-15.

³³ Manuel Rodríguez López, Tomas Furest Rivero, José Manuel García González, and Manolo Ruesga Bono, *Historia del Real Betis Balompíe (de 1900 a 1936)* (Sevilla: Biblioteca de Ediciones Andaluzas. 1981), 19, 75.

sought to fit into the growing city, an approach that worked so well that they built their next stadium, Mestalla, right next door. Alirós opened with low entrance fees of sixty *céntimos* for the *preferencia* and thirty five for general entrance that reflected the more popular focus that football had reached by the end of the decade as well as the club's junior status and need for supporters.³⁴ Lower ticket prices meant more of the working class could afford them, attend the matches, and participate in the identities being forged. Throughout the country, then, football clubs built stadiums that could cater to various classes of people and that were located in regions that made them accessible to the masses as the cities they were located in expanded. They successfully catered to the growing urbanization of the country and allowed both the middle and the working classes to participate.

Building stadiums provided another benefit to the clubs beyond the direct income they brought in and the status they confirmed. Large facilities provided an incentive for teams from other countries to tour Spain because of the significant income per match their gates could provide. San Mamés was the ultimate example of this and in its first year of existence the stadium hosted matches between Athletic and Circle des Sports Athletiques (Paris), Bienne (Switzerland), Farenvarosi de Budapest (considered to be the best team in continental Europe), Servette de Ginebra, New Crusaders (England), Civil Service (England), Leones de Flanders, Clapton Orient (England),

³⁴ Jaime Hernández Perpiñá, *Historia del Valencia F.C.* (Barcelona: C. G. Creaciones Gráficas, S.A., 1974), 15-16.

English Wanderers, and West Norwood (England).³⁵ All of these matches brought crowds to the stadium to see the foreigners and to root for their Basque team against them. Many other clubs also dove into this lucrative market of luring foreign clubs to play in Spain. In 1911, Español de Barcelona hosted the professional clubs Plumstead of London, Etoile Levalloise de Paris, and Woolwich Polytechnic, and in 1914 neighboring F.C. Barcelona entertained Middlesex Wanderers, Notts County, and Stuttgarter Kickers.³⁶

Other than individual friendlies, some groups organized tournaments to bring in foreign visitors and provide a larger attraction. A formalized version of this was the Torneo de los Pirineos Occidental held annually for most of the early 1910s, between the leading Catalan clubs and teams from southern France.³⁷ Real Sociedad de San Sebastián took a slightly different approach and organized several Semanas Futbolísticas in 1913 and 1914 that were essentially small tournaments featuring foreign clubs. The 1913 tournament drew to San Sebastián Sparta de Praga, a Selección de París, London Eleven Club, and Club Civil Service (Britain) to compete against a local selection made up of Sociedad players. The visitors in 1914 were Cantonal de Suiza, New Crusaders, and again Civil Service (Britain). As a local journalist wrote after a friendly in 1914 against the British club Clapton Orient, “el partido de ayer demostró la alta clase de estos maestros de balón, pero por encima de la maestría está el entusiasmo de los once jugadores que luchan por amor al sport y por defender los colores de la

³⁵ Mateos, *Los cincuenta años*, 31.

³⁶ Lasplazas, *Español*, 25 and Lasplazas, *Barcelona*, 40.

³⁷ Lasplazas, *Barcelona*, 33-40.

ciudad y Sociedad que representan.”³⁸ The quote reveals two of the most important forces within football: both the old pedagogical ideal of “love of the game” and the increasingly important regionalist role of a club representing its city. More practically, foreign friendlies provided a necessary source of income that every club needed badly until the institution of league play in 1929.

This trend of bringing in foreign clubs for friendly matches was important on several levels. Economically, it complemented building larger stadiums and overtly recognized the increasing importance of bringing in the paying masses. Socially, visiting foreign clubs expanded the social horizons of the sport. Foreign friendlies allowed clubs to defend the local area’s honor and pride internationally and made supporters recognize and feel a part of something larger. Such foreign friendlies promoted regionalism in particular by creating an “other” against which “their” boys could fight in a mock battle that happened in the flesh for their entertainment. This type of opportunity was extremely unusual for the common person in 1910s Spain and the novelty of watching players from France, Britain, Switzerland, Germany, and other countries in person and competing on the field before them was a draw in itself. The whole experience made discussions and newspaper articles about those countries more real and tangible in a way that few other attractions could and taught football fans to think internationally.

³⁸ Aranjuelo, *Real Sociedad*, 33-36.

Media

Around the increasing numbers of football fans, clubs, and stadiums during the 1910s, a journalistic community dedicated to sports developed as well. All over the country and particularly in Bilbao, Madrid, and Barcelona, athletics became a topic for news coverage and built up a following that sustained several publications and turned sports columns into regular sections of mainstream broadsheets. Many of these sports publications were short lived, but as the decade progressed they became more economically successful and a few established themselves as permanent features of the journalistic landscape until the outbreak of the Civil War. These newspapers contain invaluable resources ranging from the articles themselves, to information on the sportswriters who worked on them, and the advertisements that helped them survive financially. In fact, the development of sports journalism was only one section of the rapidly expanding newspaper community that resulted from rising literacy rates across Spain and urbanization in general.

During the decade, sports journalism not only expanded, but the genre itself changed as well. At the start of the decade, sports publications focused entirely on a middle and upper-class readership, but as time progressed and the social classes involved broadened, a different emphasis developed within the sporting press that reflected the influx of working-class spectators. Publications catering to higher social levels separated themselves by emphasizing motor sports, shooting, and fencing, while football, cycling, and boxing became more and more important in newspapers focused

on the masses in general. Nonetheless, this difference was a matter of emphasis and even the most aristocratic publications covered football throughout the 1910s.

In Madrid, there were various short-lived publications going back into the 1900s including *Gran Mundo y Sport* (1906-7), *Sport Universal* (1906), and *Los Sports* (1910). The first two lasting sports publications in the city were *Gran Vida* (1903-1936) and *España Sportiva* (1912-1933), both of which survived into the 1930s. *Gran Vida* was the more important of the two and openly embraced the pedagogical benefits of physical education, and football in particular, as a regenerative for the country as befitted its foundation in the first years of the century when those ideals were strongest.³⁹ The directors of *Gran Vida* worked together with Carlos Padrós of Real Madrid and the publication became the first voice of Madrid's football community. By 1920, however, the most important athletic publication in the Madrid was *Heraldo Deportivo*, which began printing issues on May 25, 1915, and continued until 1936.⁴⁰ The long-running magazine printed three issues a month, cost fifteen pesetas for an annual subscription in 1916 and fifty *céntimos* per issue in 1919, and was filled with pictures and other expensive production techniques. These elements mark *Heraldo* as a classic elite publication. It emphasized automobiles, airplanes, and other expensive activities and its pages were filled with advertisements from Chevrolet, Peugeot, Harley-Davidson, Goodyear, and Renault. Nonetheless, it was still very involved with football and its director, Ricardo Ruiz Ferry, was one of the most influential

³⁹ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 47.

⁴⁰ Information taken from a survey of *Heraldo Deportivo* available at the Hemeroteca de Madrid (HM).

sportswriters prior to 1936 and also the first president of the united Federación Española de Fútbol in 1913.⁴¹ Sports also became a regular feature of mainstream newspapers in Madrid. Throughout the decade, Ricardo Ruiz Ferry alone wrote articles for *Heraldo de Madrid*, *El Imparcial*, and *El Sol* and they all maintained regular match reports. Some of the nation's most important early sports journalists made their name writing for important Madrid newspapers that gave them a national profile they could not get anywhere else.

In Barcelona, a similarly vibrant and more organized journalistic community developed. In 1904, the periodical *The Sportsman* took over from *Los Deportes* and other newspapers gradually appeared to challenge its dominance. *El Mundo Deportivo* started publication in 1906 and gradually increased its frequency until it produced Monday, Wednesday, and Friday editions. By the 1920s, it used a broadsheet format and cost only ten *céntimos* per issue or fifteen pesetas for a year's subscription. This format and pricing marked it as a publication focusing on a mass market that reflected Barcelona's more consumer-oriented athletic community. Other newspapers also appeared in Barcelona, such as *Sports* in 1906 and *Stadium* in 1910, that became increasingly important within the city. *Stadium* reached out to a similar audience as *Heraldo Deportivo* in Madrid with less frequent issues, a magazine format, and pages filled with expensive glossy photographs.⁴² It also took a special interest in expensive sports and was the organ of the Real Automóvil Club de Cataluña, the Asociación de

⁴¹ IEE, *Copa*, 21.

⁴² Information taken from the banners of *Stadium* between 1916 and 1920 (HM).

Lawn-Tennis de Catalunya, the Moto Club Deportivo de Barcelona, the Real Polo Jockey Club, and the Federación de Sociedades Deportivas. Nonetheless, its pricing was twenty *céntimos* per issue and ten pesetas a year per subscription making individual issues occasionally affordable for the masses, even if its main target was the middle-class and above. As in Madrid, by 1910 sports were regularly covered in the mainline broadsheets including the Catalan language *La Veu de Catalunya*, *Diario de Barcelona*, and *La Publicidad* and the Castilian language *La Vanguardia*, *Las Noticias*, and *El Diluvio*.⁴³ By the 1910s, therefore, people of different classes, regional identities, and political groups in Barcelona were interested in sport, not just one section of the riven city.

Other areas also developed traditions of sports journalism in the 1910s, although they were usually confined to sections of mainstream newspapers. In Bilbao, a sports newspaper creatively named *Hércules* published issues in 1914 and others developed in competition with it such as *Los Deportes de Bilbao*. The most important sports columns, however, were printed in the *Gaceta del Norte* with its large circulation and mass audience. There was also a short-lived publication named *Sport Sevillano* that appeared in 1913 and revealed the interest in that region as well. Sports journalism became a viable career around the country and it created a collection of writers who were respected as experts on the new sport.

⁴³ Joan Josep Artells, *Barça, Barça, Barça: F.C. Barcelona, esport i ciutadania* (Barcelona: Editorial Laia, 1972), 80.

These newspapers did more than report scores and describe events: they served as communication centers for sporting communities where interested people throughout the region met for support. Articles publicized events and stirred up interest and attention by building rivalries and passions over specific matches. These publications also opened readers' horizons and helped Spain's urban residents gradually became tourists for the first time. Newspapers like *Stadium* and *Heraldo Deportivo* featured serial articles of trips to different areas of the country filled with pictures and descriptions lauding their beauty and historical importance. This led members of the urban middle-classes to go on trips of their own, either by car or on Spain's increasingly thorough railway network, and gradually the tourist industry evolved as another form of consumerism. In the first months of 1916, for example, *Stadium* featured regular articles about the Alhambra and went through the palace room by room with excellent pictures of each, while later years featured similar serials on Andorra and the Catabrian mountains.⁴⁴ Although driven largely by the development of transportation and tourism, these pictures and articles provided urban readers with limited experiences and familiarity with places they would never see personally in their lifetime. These articles helped produce what Benedict Anderson has dubbed "imagined communities."⁴⁵ Not only did urban Spaniards read the same newspapers and go to the similar schools as others like them across the country, they also read and saw pictures of the nation's

⁴⁴ *Stadium: Revista Selecta Ilustrada de Sports* (Barcelona). Such articles were included in most issues over the spring of 1916.

⁴⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

natural wonders and historic locations that called up pride in their country and made the national identity and past more concrete.

The development of sports newspapers and regular sports sections of broadsheets also established an entirely new career that became hugely influential in football's development-- sports journalism. The first sports writers were the founders of the Federación Gimnástica Española and Sociedad Gimnástica Española. For example, SGE's president, Narcisso Másferrer, helped found a variety of sports newspapers himself and wrote articles for almost every athletic newspaper in the country over his lifetime. In the 1910s, several important figures followed in his footsteps and a number of newspapermen built careers reporting the new activity with some of them gaining local notoriety of their own. Jaime Grau Castellá began working at *Mundo Deportivo* at its foundation in 1906 and continued with it for over a decade, becoming a veteran reporter in Barcelona, as did José Laspazas writing for a variety of publications. Also important were Luis G. Trías, the founder and director of the sports pages for *El Correo Catalán* and José María Co de Triola who wrote for *La Veu de Catalunya*. Even more prominent was Josep Elies i Juncosa ("Corredises"), who wrote and edited *La Veu* and *Stadium* for extended periods and who was a prominent member of the Lliga Regionalista de Catalunya.⁴⁶ The connection of so many important journalists attached to Catalan language newspapers hints at the popularity of athletics

⁴⁶ *Stadium* 6, no. 141, 5 February 1916, 81; *Stadium* 6, no. 180, 4 November 1916, 721; Artells, *Barça*, 50.

among the conservative, Barcelonan middle class that was also fighting for regional autonomy and identity.

In Madrid, sports journalists ranged across the political spectrum. On the right there were Román Sánchez Arias (“Rubrik”), who gained fame covering football for *ABC*. In the middle there was Alberto Martín Fernández (“Juan Deportista”), who wrote for a huge range of papers after starting his career with *Los Deportes de Bilbao*. In Madrid he wrote for the regenerationist *Gran Vida* and *El Sol*, the conservative Catholic *ABC*, *La Acción*, *La Jornada Deportiva*, *España Deportiva*, and even *Marca* in the 1950s.⁴⁷ On the left, Manuel Rosón published his articles primarily in *El Liberal* and became a well-known figure also. Quite simply, the football beat became an important position and recognized journalists gained prestige and authority covering it. They came from almost every political persuasion and did not link the sport to one ideology or political party alone

The greatest of these, however, was José Maria Mateos from Bilbao. Mateos was the most respected sports journalists of the age and later *seleccionador* of the Spanish national side that triumphed over England in the spring of 1929, one of the most significant moments in Spanish football history. Although a freelance writer in a variety of publications, Mateos spent most of his life as the football correspondent for *La Gaceta del Norte*, one the most important newspapers in the Basque Country. Based

⁴⁷ Félix Martialay, *¡¡¡Amberes!!!: allí nació la furia española* (Madrid: Real Federación Española de Fútbol, 2000), 103. This and indeed all of Martialay’s books are good resources filled with short biographies, quotes, and reports from federation meetings. Martialay began his journalistic career in the 1930s and his information represents a lifetime of personal relationships and collected reports on football.

in Bilbao, *La Gaceta* made Mateos the voice of a large newspaper in an important football hotbed, giving him a higher status and greater circulation than writers at sports-specific publications. Mateos played a key role in turning Rafael Moreno into “Pichichi,” the first great star of Spanish football, and he was accepted as a football authority on the national level. After the civil war, he was commissioned to write one of the first histories of Athletic de Bilbao and recorded the club’s development partially from his own experiences.

The range of Mateos’s influence on the early football world can be seen best through an event on September 8, 1915.⁴⁸ On that date, he helped organize in Bilbao a “Gran Becerrada a Beneficio de Montepío de la Asociación de la Prensa” (a bullfight using only young bulls that are smaller and less dangerous) and drew in a variety of celebrities to participate. The event charged 1.50 pesetas for seats in the shade and 0.75 for ones in the sun and featured Mateos himself, the Bilbao striker he championed (Pichichi), and other local celebrities as *matadores*, *picadores* and *banderilleros*. The event exemplified the rising power of football, with Pichichi as the central attraction for the event. Mateos’s role as organizer for an event to benefit the entire press association marked the increasing influence of sport (both football and bullfighting) within the journalistic community of Bilbao. This sort of cross promotion is key to understanding the increasing commercial draw and cultural prestige of football within Spain during the 1910s and the role of newspapermen within it. The event also provides an interesting

⁴⁸ Alberto López Echevarrieta, “*Pichichi*”: *Historia y leyenda de un mito* (Bilbao: Bilbao Bizjaia Kutxa, Colección Temas Vizcainos-Bizkaiko Gaiak, no. 205, 1992), 32-34.

picture of football's status in the nation. Football players playing at being *toreros* graphically illustrates that in the 1910s bullfighting was still a much more popular form of entertainment. The opposite would never have happened because bullfighting is more than a simple spectator activity in Spain, it is a traditional ritual that, enthusiasts at least, see as an integral part of the national identity. A bullfighter playing in a football game would have been lowering his dignity, while in the reverse situation footballers could identify themselves with the honor attached to a *matador*. Mateos, therefore, chose a bullfight for his charity match to connect the two activities and obtain crossover fans. It was also an attempt to nationalize football by associating it with Spain's traditional form of mass entertainment, thus combating the new sport's foreign nature. Such attempts to link football and bullfighting were even exhibited in Mateos's coining of the nickname "Pichichi" for Rafael Moreno. The use of nicknames was common practice in the bullfighting world and almost every important *torero* had one. So by anointing a football player with a nickname, therefore, Mateos was attempting to rank Rafael Moreno with the great bullfighters.

The local press in other areas of Spain also played active roles that consisted of more than just reporting on matches. In Galicia, the press took it upon itself to organize an early regional tournament. Held in La Coruña on June 24, 1922, the Asociación de la Prensa of "la capital herculina" organized a cup tournament between the three main clubs from the region: Celta de Vigo, Fortuna de Vigo, and Deportivo de la Coruña.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Fernández Santander, *La Coruña*, 17.

The tournament ended in a lackluster draw, but the fact that a press association organized and ran it showed the power of sports journalism in the region.

In Barcelona, sports writers took the step of unionizing themselves into the Sindicato de Periodistas Deportivas (SPD) as early as 1911. This group included most of the journalists who covered athletics in the city and included the leadership of Narciso Másferrer. They organized a charity match annually to raise money for their union and it was particularly successful in 1916.⁵⁰ The match was publicized in every significant newspaper in Barcelona, including *La Vanguardia*, *La Publicidad*, *Las Noticias*, *La Veu de Catalunya*, *El Correo Catalán*, and *Diario de Barcelona*, which collectively represented almost every political persuasion in the city. The event was carried off with the support of various local players, and both F.C. Barcelona and Español de Barcelona. Also, various pieces of art were donated by the jewelry store “El Universo” and the retail company “El Siglo,” a fact that underlined the commercial and middle-class nature of the event.⁵¹ The game was touted as a “símbolo de la armonía en que han de vivir en el mundo deportivo factores tan íntimamente relacionados entre sí como son la Prensa, las sociedades y el público.”⁵² The SPD was so successful that the Madrid sports journalists copied the idea and had their own syndicate within a few years. This development fits smoothly into the larger world because it was during World War I that middle-class white-collar groups in Madrid and other areas around

⁵⁰ *Stadium* 6, no. 182, 18 November 1916, 763-5; *Stadium* 6, no. 186, 16 December 1916, 827-30.

⁵¹ *Stadium* 6, no. 183, 25 November 1916, 782.

⁵² *Stadium* 6, no. 182, 18 November 1916, 754.

Spain began unionizing themselves in response to the development of the UGT and CNT working-class unions that gained large memberships over the 1910s.

As early as 1916, the sports press even became so ubiquitous that some leaders began criticizing it for causing problems within the game. José Ángel Barraondo was involved with all levels of the developing sport as a player in San Sebastián and Madrid, a leading referee in the 1910s, and then administrator for both Real Soceidad and the national team. In 1916, he wrote an article in *Heraldo Deportivo* attacking the football press and warning of the dangers commercialization would bring to the sport. He wrote that:

repasad los diarios y revistas deportivas y veréis que, con rara excepción, los cronistas, viertan en ellos insultos, groserías, palabras soeces, todo cuanto se les puede ocurrir, ya no a personas ineducadas, sino a aquellas de instinto perverso, malo, dañino...Que el *sport* muera, pero que nuestro equipo predilecto quede bien, parece ser la máxima de los cronistas de fútbol.⁵³

Essentially, football was fading from being a gentlemanly activity to a working class one and sportswriters were on the forefront of that change. For journalists, and the ever increasing masses they wrote for, the success of the team dominated everything and “the good of the sport or nation” through physical fitness faded into the background. Petty squabbles and rough, plebian language produced football’s version of “yellow journalism” because it sold copies, plain and simple. The development of print journalism, therefore, was a critical step for football that stoked interest and changed the style and approach to the sport so that it became more acceptable to the working class.

⁵³ J.A. Barraondo, “Fútbol: Los cronistas deportivos,” *Heraldo Deportivo* 2, no. 27, 15 February 1916.

Stars

The last important example of the changing nature of football in the 1910s was the creation of Spanish football's first stars. During the decade, the sport's profile became high enough that its best players gained local celebrity status. The situation of a "star," however, was a complex one because of their presumed amateur status and left them in a very ambiguous situation once the cheers faded away. Some of the early stars of the 1910s include José María Balausteguigoitia Landaluca (one of the most important team leaders of Athletic de Bilbao), Mariano Arrate Esnaola (leader of Real Sociedad throughout the decade), Patricio Arbolaza Arambura (the main star of Real Unión de Irún), and Paulino Alcántara Riestra (an early leader of F.C. Barcelona).⁵⁴ Although only a brief list, this provides an idea of the geographical diversity already represented and all had enough local fame to have benefit matches held for them when they retired. By far the most important and enduring star and the only one with a true national reputation during the 1910s, however, was Rafael Moreno, known popularly by his nickname Pichichi.⁵⁵ Today the name Pichichi is a permanent part of the Spanish football world and is known by almost every male in the country because the annual trophy for the highest scoring player in the Spanish league was named after him. Beyond this legacy, Rafael Moreno provides an excellent illustration of the background and complexity of players in the 1910s.

⁵⁴ Martialay, *Amberes*, 121, 131, 137-9.

⁵⁵ There are lots of supposed explanations for the origin of Moreno's nickname. It should be noted, however, that realistically no one is absolutely sure where it came from.

Rafael Moreno Aranzadi was born on May 3, 1892, the second son of a Bilbao lawyer named Joaquín Moreno Goñi and his wife Dalmacia Aranzadi Unamuno. In fact, Moreno's family was a classic model of the upwardly-mobile, professional middle class Basque families who had introduced the sport to the Basque Country a decade earlier. The family had several high-profile relatives that marked their social circle as a solidly affluent one, although not aristocratic. Most notably, Moreno's great uncle was Miguel de Unamuno, the important thinker, philosopher, and writer of the early 1900s.⁵⁶ In fact, it was to Unamuno that Pichichi's mother went in 1916 in hopes of finding her son a "real job," because being a football player did not earn Rafael a regular salary. Unamuno wrote Indalecio Prieto (the important and moderate leader of the Basque Socialist party) suggesting Rafael Moreno for a job in Caja de Ahorros Municipal de Bilbao. Prieto soundly rejected the idea.

Nor was Unamuno the only successful professional in the family. Rafael's uncle, Telesforo de Aranzadi y Unamuno, was a successful anthropologist and naturalist who taught mineralogy and zoology at the University of Granada and later was a professor of anthropology in Barcelona. Within his nuclear family, Pichichi's older brother, Raimundo, was an exemplar of the educated entrepreneur of their generation.⁵⁷ Their father sent Raimundo to school in London where he earned a degree as a mining engineer. When he returned, Raimundo worked most of his life at the Orconera mines near Bilbao where he became one of the most important engineers. Raimundo also

⁵⁶ López Echevarrieta, *Pichichi*, 8, 37-38. On page 38, López includes a copy of the letter Prieto returned to Unamuno asking about the position for Rafael.

⁵⁷ López Echevarrieta, *Pichichi*, 8-12.

returned to Bilbao as an avid swimmer and footballer who played with his younger brother and encouraged Rafael's enthusiasm for football. Rafael himself was expected to follow a similar academic trajectory, although as a second son the expectations placed upon him were significantly less. In his youth, he took law classes at the Jesuit University of Deusto with the idea of following his father's career. This family background marked him vividly as a member of the Bilbao professional middle-class that dominated football through the 1910s and led the city's economic resurgence.

Rafael Moreno's interest in football went back to his youth when the first generation of players inspired the young boy. He was nine years old when he first watched Athletic Club play Bilbao F.C. in 1902 at the early Lamiaco fields and the later triumphs of Bizcaya at the first Copa de España won him over as an enthusiast of the sport.⁵⁸ He became infatuated with the team, memorized all of their names, and turned them into personal heroes to emulate. Rafael himself started playing in the streets near his secondary school and later at various open areas around Bilbao where enthusiastic youths gathered, such as the fields near the Plaza Elíptica and the Campo de los Ingleses, a destination popular with British sailors. He also went to the Lamiaco fields on Sundays and festival days to watch and to play himself. These early experiences reveal the hold football already had on many youths of the day. It increasingly shaped their free time and socializing in and out of school and fundamentally changed their everyday interests.

⁵⁸ López Echevarrieta, *Pichichi*, 14-15.

In 1910, at the age of eighteen, Rafael Moreno began playing football for Athletic de Bilbao. He began on recreational basis, but as he grew more successful on the field the club provided him with easy jobs to pay his bills like most of the better players received. Rafael played with the club for eleven years and by his retirement in 1921 had become a myth in his own lifetime at least partially through the writing of José Maria Mateos. Pichichi led the club to national titles in 1914, 1915, 1916, and 1921 and victories against a wide range of visiting foreign clubs such as the British teams Shepherd's Bush and Civil Service. These victories brought the club support around the region and established its regional identity by repeatedly showing Basques triumphing over all comers. His skill and popularity helped Athletic build San Mamés and he was given the mixed-language moniker of the "rey de shoot" that reinforced the blending of the two cultures. Other writers drew bullfighting analogies and referred to him as the "Manolete de fútbol," calling up the name of the greatest bullfighter of the age as a worthy comparison.⁵⁹ This once again drove home the comparison between football and the most commercialized sporting activity on the peninsula, bullfighting. It reaffirms that football was still striving for those heights, but also suggests that the new sport was making significant progress because such comparisons were generally accepted. As mentioned before, he performed as a matador in the September 1915 *corrida* organized by Mateos and in 1918 competed in the Campeonatos Vizcaínas de Atletismo and won the javelin throw. Essentially, Pichichi was a football player who

⁵⁹ *San Mamés*, 85.

became a public figure and participated in a range of activities around Bilbao that emphasized his fame.

A good example of his popularity and the connection developing between Pichichi, Athletic, and Basque identity are several portraits that were painted in the mid-1910s. Both were done by local artists who specialized in capturing the “Basque essence” and were recruited to capture images of the club for that reason. The first was painted by José Arrúe commissioned by the club. It depicts the entire 1915 and 1916 championship team standing in front of a goal. The image emphasized the individual personalities of the club’s “heroes” and the club reprinted the images from it regularly for years in programs, magazines, and even on tickets, anything that could be associated with the club essentially. With his long nose emphasized by a sideways pose on the right side of the picture, Pichichi was the most recognizable figure and soon became the club’s most saleable icon.⁶⁰

The second painting, “Diálogo en campos de sport” depicted Rafael Moreno in his football uniform, leaning on a fence, and casually flirting with a young woman (his future wife Avelina Rodríguez Miguel).

⁶⁰ Sala Rekalde, *Athletic Club 1898-1998: arte en la catedral* (Bilbao: Athletic Club de Bilbao, 1998), 8-13. Arrúe also painted a wonderful portrayal of the early San Mamés showing a match in progress with the first grandstand on the left, cultivated fields on the right, and the sanitarium that gave the field its name in the background. His style in both pictures is wonderfully bright and cheerful and sets a tone of an idyllic afternoon outside.



Illustration 4.2 “Diálogo en campos de sport” by Aurelio Arteta although it is also often referred to as “Idilio de campos de sport.” Colección del Athletic Club de Bilbao.

The portrait was painted by one of the most representative figures of Basque painting prior to the Civil War, Aurelio Arteta. A native of Bilbao, Arteta specialized in realistic images of Basque laborers, farmers, and miners that produced a rustic and sober picture of Basque life.⁶¹ He rarely painted portraits of well-known individuals and his capture of Pichichi on canvas in such a realistic and relaxed image emphasized the idea of a “down to earth” and very “Basque” hero. The couple’s later marriage added the ideal of romantic love to the painting’s significance and it became part of Pichichi’s mythology

⁶¹ J. Ramón Fernández, *Pintores vascos* (Guipúzcoa: MCC, 1983), 65-80.

during his lifetime. It symbolized the blend of amateurism, fame, and “well-behaved” middle-class participation of 1910s football.

In 1920, Pichichi’s career peaked when he led the first Spanish national team to the Antwerp Olympics where they won second place. By then, however, Rafael was already fading physically and he retired from football in 1921. His condition declined rapidly and he died of typhus in the spring of 1922. Realistically, Pichichi’s rapid decline and death only heightened the mythology surrounding him and his death brought out a wealth of extended newspaper obituaries glorifying his life. Mostly notably *El Noticiero Bilbaíno* published:

...con la muerte de ‘Pichichi’ desaparece el que fue uno de los más firmes sostenes del fútbol vizcaíno. Descanse en paz el malogrado ex-jugador. La afición deportiva no le olvidará fácilmente, y siempre que un jugador la electrice con una magnífica jugada, se acordará de aquél que ha pasado a mejor vida.⁶²

This comment and the others it echoed made clear the sense of loss felt by the whole community, which was extraordinary for someone who was “only” a football player. In the months after his death, Athletic de Bilbao organized a charity match in Moreno’s honor with the proceeds going to his wife and daughter (recognition that he and his family had not reaped the full economic benefits of his fame). Finally on December 8, 1926, the club unveiled a bronze bust of Pichichi in San Mames that has overlooked their matches ever since.⁶³ Essentially, Rafael Moreno “the man” gradually became Pichichi “the myth,” even during his own lifetime. He became a popular figure that combined the sport and club with an ideal image of a Basque man and identity- and one

⁶² López Echevarrieta, *Pichichi*, 52 from *El Noticiero Bilbaíno*.

⁶³ López Echevarrieta, *Pichichi*, 54-57.

that symbolized their regular defeat of Madrid and Barcelona on the football field. This image satisfied the Basque national identity, sold tickets for the club, and drew more and more people to the sport.

Interestingly, players were not the only famous figures football produced in the 1910s. A significant tradition also developed of hiring foreign and usually British coaches who attained a certain level of stardom themselves. Brits, by their very nationality, were presumed to be football experts and they usually did bring significant experience with professional British sides. Their presence reiterated the status and social power British origins continued to wield throughout the world. The two classic examples were the enigmatic managers of Athletic de Bilbao, Mr. Barness (coached from 1914-15, 1919-1920) and Mr. Fred Pentland (coached from 1925-25, 1929-33).⁶⁴ Barness brought experience from the British club Sunderland and his status as a “British gentleman” gave him social stature as well. He coached the club to victory in both 1914 and 1915 before leaving to fight for Britain in World War I and his discipline, training and technical skill garnered much of the credit. This success brought its own prestige and fame and the caricature of Barness in a bowler hat and smoking a large cigar became almost as recognizable an image in Bilbao as Pichichi himself. Fred Pentland picked this legacy in the 1920s and 1930s developed a similar and even more powerful reputation, leading the club to four cup trophies and two league championships. The interest in and respect for foreign coaches seems at odds with the

⁶⁴ Barness returned to Britain soon after the start of World War I to serve his country during that conflict and then returned to Spain after the war. For information on Barness see López Echevarrieta, *Pichichi*, 29-30.

desire to nationalize or regionalize the sport. It was accepted, however, because it helped football maintain its European and modern allure that the reform-minded, urban middle-class public embraced. In Spain, therefore, a British football coach embodied the mystique of modernity, British prestige, and technical expertise that those fighting to Europeanize Spain wanted as a model. This approach was copied across Spain and foreign coaches were a very common aspect of the football world before the Civil War.

National Organization

One of the most important elements of football's development into a mass consumer activity in the 1910s was the establishment of regional and national governing bodies. These organizations regulated and organized competition by maintaining standards on and off the field and providing football clubs with a stable environment in which to develop. The Federación Española de Clubs de Fútbol (later given a royal title to become the Real Federación Española de Fútbol or RFEF) and a plethora of regional federations strove to provide this stability, although they often devolved into infighting amongst themselves. Aside from producing standardized matches and tournaments, these federations dealt with the important problem of establishing requirements for referee conduct and impartiality through referee colleges. All was not smooth, however, and regular fighting among clubs, regional federations, and national federations took most of the decade to end. By 1920, most problems had been

hammered out and passing those hurdles provided an organizational foundation for football's popular explosion in the next decade.

Under the direction of Carlos Padrós, the Federación Española de Clubs de Fútbol was established in 1905 to organize the annual cup tournament. The young organization ran each tournament, but this became increasingly difficult as champions demanded the right to host the next year's tournament and more and more clubs asked to participate. In 1909, the federation was reorganized, given more power, and changed its name to the shorter Federación Española de Fútbol. This attempt at stricter governance sparked several years of controversy and infighting among the major clubs who basically refused to accept the national body's authority. The differences briefly produced a counter organization called the Real Unión Española de Clubs de Fútbol which caused serious problems in 1911 and 1913. The first controversy began in 1910 over who had the right to host the next tournament. The previous year's champions, Ciclista de San Sebastián, expected to hold the tournament, began their preparations, and even announced match dates. When the new national federation decided not to give them the tournament, Ciclista (under the name Vasconia F.C.) formed the Unión de Clubs and held their own tournament with Athletic de Bilbao and Madrid F.C.. FEF then held its own tournament in Madrid with three teams also, F.C. Barcelona, Deportivo de La Coruña, and Español de Madrid.⁶⁵ Instead of bringing unity, the new federation had produced disarray and dissension in a scant two years.

⁶⁵ *Real Federación Española de Fútbol: 1913-1988* (Madrid: RFEF, 1988), 48-50 and Joaquín Soto Barrera, *Historie de fútbol en España* (Madrid: Compañía Ibero-Americana, 1930), 25-27, 37.

In 1911, the national organization attempted to bring everything together, but controversy once again abounded. Bilbao was named as host, but because it had won the Unión championship the previous year that right was questioned forcefully by Barcelona, the holder of the 1910 Federación tournament.⁶⁶ Nationalism played a role as well, with several clubs refusing to play against Bilbao because they fielded several British-born players. The tournament ended with almost all of the teams going home early and the federation was barely able to field two teams to finish the tournament-- the chaos continued. Next in 1913, there were once again two tournaments, with one held in Barcelona by the Unión and a second in Madrid by the Federación, but after that spring the schism finally ended and the authority of the Federación was loosely accepted. This was made possible through the authority of Ricardo Ruíz Ferry, whom all of the teams respected and who became president of the newly united Real Federación Española de Fútbol. The teams' motive was largely ending the strife that divided the football community and limited their own profits and fan support. There was never another serious division or rebellion against RFEF because after 1913 the economic costs of non-participation simply became too high for any team, but that does not mean there was peace within the community. In *ABC*, Rubryk even went so far as to describe the mid-1910s as “un período de anarquía” because the national federation was forced to grant the regions so much control over the game in their area.⁶⁷ Still, difference and divisions were kept as orderly as possible after 1913 because clubs were

⁶⁶ IEE, *Copa*, 25-28.

⁶⁷ “Fútbol,” *Heraldo Deportivo* 2, no. 50, 5 October 1916, 324.

becoming businesses and national and regional tournaments were their main income. Essentially, the increasing importance of a national federation was inevitable because everyone needed stability for financial success. Building stadiums required a large investment from each club and once a club made that investment it increasingly wanted to profit from its outlay. Similarly, as players like Pichichi became recognized names, they had to be given some sort of income. In the 1910s, this usually meant easy jobs where the players did little real work, but even that level of financial support had to be funded by the club. Essentially, the growth of the sport set capitalism into motion.

Dissension later in the 1910s resulted from the increasing number of regional federations founded to organize and regulate the sport in every part of the country. Through the first decade of the 1900s, the only important regional federations were those of Madrid, Catalonia, and the Norte (originally a combination of the Basque Country, clubs from Asturias, and the northwest as well). New federations developed everywhere over the 1910s, and by 1919 there were eight regional federations represented at the national final: Asturias, Galicia, Vizcaya, Guipuzcoa, Catalonia, Andalusia, the Central, and the Levante.⁶⁸ The existence of these federations reveals how thoroughly the sports had expanded in only twenty years and the intensity of participation everywhere. Most notably, the Basque Country had so many clubs that the Norte first separated from Galicia and Asturias and then into two separate federations within the Basque Country alone (and it actually became three in the 1920s). This level

⁶⁸ IEE, *Copa*, 73.

of interest reinforces the image of a sport not just existing, but thriving and becoming a significant cultural force throughout the country.

These regional federations and the ever growing number of teams they represented also brought changes to the national tournament. By the early 1910s, there were more teams who wanted to play in the national tournament than could be accommodated, especially because each region of the country was only supposed to send one club to the tournament. To handle this problem, each regional federation instituted its own tournament to choose a regional champion and representative in the Copa del Rey.⁶⁹ By 1915, Madrid, Catalonia, the Norte, and Galicia had their own regional tournaments and in a few years they were followed by the rest of the country. By the end of the decade the regional tournaments themselves were hotly contested and well-attended events almost as important as the national tournament itself. They were critical battle grounds where local clubs developed identities by competing against one other every year and made imagined communities tangible.

The regional federations also presided over slightly different styles of play than one another, with the greatest division being the type of field used in different areas of the country. The climate across Spain varies widely and ranges from the wet Atlantic coast, to the dry interior verging on desert in the southwest, and then the Mediterranean climate of the eastern coast. As a result, on the Atlantic northern coast football was played on grass fields just as in northern Europe, and the early stadiums in Irún, Bilbao,

⁶⁹ Sota Barrera, *Historia del fútbol*, 30.

Gijón, Vigo, and La Coruña were grass.⁷⁰ In Castile, the Levante, and Andalusia, however, teams played on hard dirt fields called “campos duros.” Different footballs were used on the two types of fields and players adopted different tactics on each surface. The difference between fields created a division in the football world and led to a northern elitism because the game there was closer to the internationally accepted version.⁷¹ The prevalence of dirt fields became a direct concern for many federations because football enthusiasts argued that teams could not host foreigners as equals or attract as many of them until they had grass pitches for visitors to play on. As it was put in the pages of *Heraldo Deportivo* in 1916, “púsose, además, de manifiesto que, para poder alternar con los equipos extranjeros, es indispensable tener campos de verdes, pues en campos yermos y duros no se explica el fútbol auténtico.”⁷² More specifically, contemporary articles and newspapers cited Madrid’s lack of a venue with a grass field as the reason the capital received fewer visiting foreign clubs than Bilbao and Barcelona.⁷³ One article even suggested that when a team could not afford to maintain a grass pitch it should work with the local federation and other clubs to establish a communal field.

En ese campo podrían celebrarse los partidos de pago, y así, los demás campos podrían, automáticamente, quedar exentos de tributos de todo género, carga penosa que no todos pueden soportar y que jamás podrán resarcir con los

⁷⁰ Caso, *Fútbol*, 24-26.

⁷¹ In fact, Basque player’s experience on grass fields was one of the reasons that Basques dominated the first Spanish national teams in the 1920s.

⁷² “Fútbol Ibérico,” *Heraldo Deportivo* 2, no. 23, 4 January 1916, 6.

⁷³ Chipili-Chapla, “Fútbol” *Heraldo Deportivo* 2, no. 24, 15 January 1916, 11.

ingresos de partidos de pago, si no se hace un calendario deportivo que permita á todos los campos.⁷⁴

It was, therefore, a regional federation's job to raise the organization and professionalization of football clubs in its area. This goal was important for multiple reasons from establishing venues that could regularly and efficiently bring in money and satisfy spectators (the arguments of mass consumerism) to making the region and nation modern and advanced enough for visiting foreign clubs and the international press they brought with them (the arguments of nationalism). Regional federations, therefore, were an absolute necessity that needed to be established and obtain significant power in 1910s for the sport to blossom in the 1920s. The goal of providing grass fields itself also reveals the rapidly increasing difference between urban and rural life in Spain. Football federations were raising funds to create grass fields in Spain's cities, while desperately needed irrigation projects for the rural population went untouched because the government did not have the money. This difference in perspective and resources reaffirms the massive gap between urban and rural life across Spain.

After the national federation's reunification in 1913, RFEF began to regulate and standardize the rules of the game, and the most important step in that direction was defining the guidelines and requirements for referees. Over the subsequent years, the national federation normalized competition across the country by copying and enforcing the contemporary rules for professional football used in Great Britain. First, line judges

⁷⁴ "Fútbol Ibérico," *Heraldo Deportivo* 2 no. 23, 4 January 1916, 6.

(or linesmen) were instituted and differentiated from the match referees. With that established, referee rankings developed that placed all referees in four categories: First, Second, Third, and Aspirant.⁷⁵ Federations also organized “colegios de árbitros” that were professional associations for referees whose function was equivalent to professional organizations for doctors and lawyers. The foremost of these was the Colegio Nacional de Árbitros founded in 1917.⁷⁶ This national group strove to unite the *colegios* of each regional federation and was jointly funded by RFEF and the regional federations to guarantee its independence.

Each regional federation also developed its own organization for referees and a few became licensed by the international football body (FIFA) to work international matches.⁷⁷ *Colegios de árbitros* organized and standardized the salary of its members for matches at the highest levels. A referee’s standard fee by the end of the 1910s and for most of the 1920s, usually ran between fifty and seventy-five pesetas per sanctioned match, depending on the ranking of the referee himself and the level of the teams competing. In a championship match, however, that fee usually rose to one hundred pesetas. Of that money, sixty percent went to the referee himself and the other forty percent went his *colegio* so that it could train new referees and continue to provide fair matches. Such salaries were very high for one day’s work and represent how important

⁷⁵ Sota Barrera, *Historia del fútbol*, 28-29.

⁷⁶ “Fútbol,” *Heraldo Deportivo* 3, no. 63, 15 February 1917, 53. The decision to establish a national *colegio* was made at meeting of RFEF held on January 28, 1917 and with the leaders of Spanish football present and representing the different regions.

⁷⁷ Not many gained this distinction, however, and by 1929 only seven referees in Spain held an international license.

the referee's role had become. The qualities that made a good impartial referee were heavily debated and teams regularly demanded to have referees replaced before their matches. For example in 1915, Real Club Deportivo de Español protested a Señor Arzuaga before their cup final and had him replaced with Walter German, a Swiss man who was one of the most respected referees of the decade.⁷⁸ Guaranteeing that each match was fair and uniform became increasingly important as football became a consumer attraction. If the public were going to pay money to watch, the competition had to be for real and fair-- otherwise clubs would simply be con-artists and interest would fade. So the establishment of such *colegios de arbitros* provided football in the 1910s with a powerful argument for its legitimacy as both entertainment and sport.

Not coincidentally, an early Spanish book on the history of football, *Fútbol: asociación y rugby* by Alonso de Caso, argued that very point in 1924. Caso emphasized that impartiality above all things was needed in a referee and that biased refs were the worst sort of creature in the game. While recognizing it as the hardest job on the field, he explained that referees had a “función discrecional, diplomática, presidencial, que corrige, conlleva, guía, con la confianza que da saberse autoridad suprema e inapelable, apoyada y defendida por la organización oficial y por los jugadores y espectadores sensatos....”⁷⁹ Essentially, Caso argued that the referee's role made the game legitimate and worthy of the spectator's time. It was not surprising, then, that these referees were almost all ex-players from the middle classes who carried

⁷⁸ IEE, *Copa*, 48-55.

⁷⁹ Caso, *Fútbol*, 29-41.

a certain amount of authority with them. For example, one of the most influential referees in the 1910s was José Angel Berraondo, who came from the professional middle-class of San Sebastián, helped found Real Sociedad, played with Real Madrid, and even played football in Britain and Argentina. He, therefore, combined social prestige, personal experience on the field, and international knowledge, making him an ideal referee. It is also significant that a Swiss man, Walter German, was another important *árbitro* at the time. As with foreign coaches, German brought international expertise to bear and this made him more authoritative and desired as a referee who was free of local loyalties and animosities.

A similar point was made in another early book, *De Fútbol: ¿como debe ser un buen árbitro?: consejos de un aficionado*, written in 1919 by one of the most important sports journalists of the period, Román Sánchez Arias.⁸⁰ Sánchez wrote a detailed handbook for refereeing football matches to limit the threats to the social order that were developing across the country. Like Alonso de Caso, he centralized the role of the referee and described him as “la única y soberana autoridad en el campo” and “un guardia de orden público,” a particularly interesting phrase since urban police forces were appearing in this period as well.⁸¹ Sánchez identified qualities they needed such as “memoria, entendimiento, vista y rapidez de juicios” and explained each quality and its value in detail. The range of topics included how to decide if the field is playable, working with line judges, and the positives and negatives of referees being ex-players.

⁸⁰ Román Sánchez Arias, *De fútbol: ¿como debe ser un buen árbitro?: consejos de un aficionado* (Madrid: Imp. de A. Marzo. 1919), 15.

⁸¹ Sánchez Arias, *De fútbol*, 15.

Sánchez even went on to discuss the contemporary rules of the game, their application on the field, and concluded with a section on how spectators should behave so that they “respected and ennobled” the game. This detailed and specific approach emphasized the importance of on-field regulation to the sport and Sánchez’s high profile underlined that need further. Along with federations, impartial and consistent refereeing was a necessary requirement to sell the game to consumers, so it had to be worked out in 1910s for football to develop a true mass following. These organizational issues had to be worked out for football to make the transition from the middle-class to the masses.

Developing Identities

One of the driving forces behind football’s growing popularity was each club’s development of an identity that drew in supporters. Interest soared when fans came to view a club as “theirs,” so clubs did everything they could to create a bond between fans and players. Teams consciously created identities and introduced colors, flags, and other symbols so that they stood for something within their local community. They cast themselves as the representatives of regions, cities, neighborhoods, and social classes and made choices to use words in Spanish, English, and Catalan to validate those identities. To promote unity, clubs organized celebrations for victories, group travel to matches, sponsorships from prominent city figures, products that enhanced their images, and most importantly rivalries with other clubs. Essentially, football teams

embraced anything that built interest in matches and raised the paid attendance and socio numbers as they transitioned from friendly associations into businesses.

One area where identity became particularly controversial was the issue of language. As discussed in Chapter 3, football was an inherently British activity that came with a whole vocabulary of English words. These foreign words were often adopted directly until Castilian equivalents gradually replaced them. By the 1910s, this was a sensitive topic that many clubs and journalists addressed directly. In *Heraldo Deportivo*, Ricardo Ruiz Ferry (under the pseudonym of Chipli-Chapla) discussed the problem in relation to a proposition made to the Academia Española de la Lengua to invent a Castilian vocabulary for football. Ruíz Ferry noted that with good or bad pronunciations most Spaniards used “offside” or “corner” instead of their equivalents “fuera de juego” and “saque de esquina” and also asked “¿Quién dice hoy ó escribe *balompié*? Nadie; y otro tanto sucedería con el resto de las palabras....”⁸² In the end, he concluded that translating everything was simply impractical and that a mixed adaptation of terms as suggested by the contemporary president of Madrid F.C. was the only solution.

More practically, some clubs emphasized their Spanish identity by directly incorporating a Spanish word and syntax into their names. Madrid F.C., for example eventually changed their name to Madrid C.F to emphasize the Castilian phrase “club de fútbol” over the English “football club.” English terms such as goal, shoot, referee,

⁸² Ricardo Ruíz Ferry, “Fútbol: Un proposición el foot-ball á la academia,” *Heraldo Deportivo* 2, no. 28, 25 February 1916, 52-53.

sport, back, and goalkeeper were used regularly and dominated the sport. In opposition, however, the journalist Mariano de Cavia organized a newspaper campaign against the use and abuse of English football terms in 1907. De Cavia was a famous journalist who spent most of his career writing for *El Liberal* and Madrid and he had a long history fighting to reform customs and promote the precise use of language. In response, one of the most important teams in Seville adopted the Spanish translation “balompíe” instead of the English “football club” in its name.⁸³ The semantics of a club’s name was particularly important because it usually identified the team with the working class. This process played out in Seville with Seville F.C. and Real Betis Balompíe developing distinctly different class identities (despite both being basically middle-class). The first club in the city had been founded by students of the local Escuela Politécnica. In 1909, one of the club’s leaders wanted to add an excellent player who worked at the school-- even though he was from the working class.⁸⁴ The directors refused and the club split between those willing to accept working-class players (who in 1914 became Real Betis) and those who would not (who became Seville F.C.). As their rivalry developed between 1910 and 1915, Betis became the team of the working class and promoted this through their inclusion of “balompíe” in their name, while Seville F.C. developed an elite identity to draw upon.⁸⁵ The simple change of the word

⁸³ Rodríguez López, *Real Betis Balompíe*, 46.

⁸⁴ Rodríguez López, *Real Betis Balompíe*, 35, 41.

⁸⁵ How much these identities really represented the makeup of the each club is highly debatable. This is driven home by the fact that it was Betis, not Seville, that obtained the royal title through one of their presidents Pedro Rodríguez de la Borbolla, the son of a minister to the crown, but then that differentiation between reality and image itself is significant.

“balompíe” made clubs who adopted it more acceptable to many fans. This was especially important with working-class supporters who were more parochial in their self-perceptions than the Europeanizing members of the middle classes. The world *balompíe*, therefore, became a way for clubs to assert a working-class identity in the growing consumer sport. Such an overt attempt to mold perceptions reflected, in a popular setting, the divisions among the educated elite between liberals, who wanted to Europeanize Spain, and conservatives, who strove to centralize the country and assert the dominance of traditional values. As a result, the use of English, words, such as “football” itself, remained common and acceptable in names in Catalonia, Barcelona, and the largest urban areas. However, in more rural and politically conservative regions like Andalucía and Castile, football was most often translated into *balompíe* because hispanization was more important to the local population-- or at least because the elites chose to foster that self-perception on the working class.

Other clubs created an identity by developing their society into an organization that did more than just play football, or as F.C. Barcelona later put it they became “more than a club.” Besides football, many teams organized a plethora of activities that gave them a larger identity in the city and allowed some of them to become community centers for their supporters and neighborhoods. They also took up public roles in their cities by organizing benefit matches for victims of natural disasters and general events that emphasized the positive role they played in the community. Two of the best examples of this approach were the two branches of Athletic, Bilbao and Madrid, that

both regularly contributed to the communities that supported and cheered them.

Athletic de Bilbao promoted Basque national identity in general, the city's professional middle class in particular, and strove to have a positive influence on the city. In 1918, one example came after the Spanish flu ravaged the citizens of Bilbao. To support the stricken community, Athletic de Bilbao organized a benefit match and handed over all the proceeds to a fund that helped the victims and their families. This act increased the respect and social importance of the club and showed that it could directly help people in troubled times.⁸⁶

Athletic de Madrid played an even more important role for Basques living in Madrid. As a minority in the capital, they gravitated together and the club provided them with a community center that organized numerous activities. Run by the influential Julian Ruete, Athletic de Madrid developed into one of the most important football clubs and the largest tennis club in Madrid. During the 1913-14 season, the society also absorbed Madrid Hockey Club and by 1917 it added sections dedicated to football and track and field.⁸⁷ In 1914, Ruete opened the club to women and within a year they had three hundred female members. This move brought wives and daughters into the society and made it a family organization for everyone in the local Basque community. Athletic de Madrid, therefore, became an organization that ran numerous sports that the whole family could participate in. The family emphasis was particularly important in the Basque urban, immigrant community because it kept everyone

⁸⁶ *San Mamés*, 94-95.

⁸⁷ "Sociedades Deportivas," *Heraldo Deportivo* 3, no. 86, 5 October 1917, 346-9.

involved and allowed everyone to be present at its facilities. The Basques needed one another for support in Madrid, to have limited the club to only men would have harshly limited that service the club provided to the community.

The ultimate example of identity creation, however, was F.C. Barcelona. When Hans Gamper reclaimed the presidency in December 1908, the club was on the verge of disintegration. The team survived through a combination of Gamper's enthusiasm and his aggressive search for financial support from anyone in Barcelona who would give him money. To this end, he promoted the team as a "Catalan" club to gain the sympathy and support of Barcelona's professional bourgeoisie, who supported the Catalan autonomy movement. This led F.C. Barcelona to a conservative, middle-class identity because the city's working classes were mostly immigrants from other regions of Spain and not interested in Catalan nationalism. As early as 1908, Gamper reached out to the leaders of the conservative, Catalan political party the Lliga Regionalista, which was a natural move because of its ascendancy during the period and its make-up of successful businessmen and professionals with whom Gamper had much in common.⁸⁸ As early as 1908, he established a relationship with Francesc Cambó i Batlle, a city councilor, leader of the Lliga Regionalist (after the death of Prat de la Riba in 1917), and later minister of Fomento and Hacienda in the national government. Also brought into the fold was Joan Ventosa i Calvell, another important member of the Lliga Regionalista, the original director of the Catalanista newspaper *El Poble Català*

⁸⁸ Artells, *Barça, Barça, Barça*, 86-88.

and a conservative nationalist who was a board member of several important companies. Another person included by mid-decade was Luís Durán i Ventosa, an important Lliga politician and prominent journalist. Gamper lured such personages to matches with free tickets and offered them publicity for their involvement. This approach became particularly attractive after March 1914 when the Catalan movement succeeded in creating the Mancomunitat de Catalunya, a special regional government. The Mancomunitat provided a rallying point for the Catalan autonomy movement and drew wide ranging support in the city that reached beyond the Lliga alone. The Mancomunitat and F.C. Barcelona worked together to further their common cause and communication between the leaders of the two organizations naturally grew.

The relationship with the Lliga also brought the club regular newspaper support that stretched beyond the sporting world. By 1918, the strongly Catalanista newspaper that Luís Durán wrote for, *La Veu de Catalunya*, directly connected the club with the autonomy movement. On November 25, one article even declared that “d’un club de Catalunya ha passat, el F.C. Barcelona, a ésser el club de Catalunya.”⁸⁹ As a result of these connections, F.C. Barcelona became an active, athletic symbol of Catalanismo. Unlike the Lliga Regionalist, however, as an athletic organization F.C. Barcelona was capable of breaking through social classes and obtaining support from beyond just the pro-Catalan middle classes. In the 1920s, Catalan identity became less conservative and a more popular brand of Catalan nationalism developed as the Lliga Regionalista faded.

⁸⁹ Artells, *Barça, Barça, Barça*, 109.

This shift actually worked out well for the football club because it allowed F.C. Barcelona's Catalan identity to attract a mass following at the same time as football was becoming a working class attraction. As a result, the club became less conservative and more radical in the 1920s and 1930s, which led to direct conflict between the club and the civil authorities. This process would confirm the importance of F.C. Barcelona as the team of ALL of Catalonia and not just the conservative, middle-class Catalonia of the Lliga Regionalista.

The counterpoise to F.C. Barcelona was Real Club Deportivo Español, which established a Spanish and working-class identity within the Catalan city. Español already had the tradition of being anti-foreigner or anti-Protestant by 1910 after competing with F.C. Barcelona since the turn of the century. Within the city, developing a "Spanish" identity meant embracing the working class that had at best a limited interest in the Catalan movement and Español's political connections directly reflected this. One of the clubs early leaders in 1900 was Ángel Rodríguez Méndez who was a professor, hygienist, and prominent member of regional gymnastic association.⁹⁰ Rodríguez was also a friend and active member of Alejandro Lerroux's Radical Republican political movement that drew its support from the immigrant working classes of Barcelona and attacked the Catholic, conservatism of the Barcelonan middle-classes.⁹¹ For decades, Lerrouxism stood in opposition to Catalan nationalism within the region and Lerroux clashed directly with Francesc Cambó in 1907 when he

⁹⁰ Artells, *Barça, Barça, Barça*, 33, 58.

⁹¹ José Álvarez Junco, *El emperador del paralelo: Lerroux y la demagogia populista* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1990).

was accused of subverting the regional movement in an election. With these connections, the club naturally emphasized their Spanishness by choosing the name “Español” and obtaining the royal title in 1912 to assert their connection to the whole country. By the end of the decade, clashes between the fans of Barcelona and Espanola became regular occurrences and the two clubs openly disrespected one another. A critical point came in 1919, which was the highpoint of the political movement for Catalan autonomy. The Catalan football federation organized a match to honor F.C. Barcelona and every first-division club in Catalonia attended in a show unity-- every club except Español which distanced itself from the event, presumably to demonstrate its political differences. Essentially, Español develop a working-class identity similar in the sporting world to Lerrouxism’s in politics and reproduced Barcelona’s political division on the football pitch. Lerrouxism drew on the actively working class in Barcelona centered in the streets surrounding the Avenida de Paralelo in the old districts of the city and in the shadow of Montjuic. The area was ill-lit, dirty, and rife with prostitution and it generally preferred a wide range of entertainments, such as Spanish zarzuelas, French melodramas, bullfights, and even the American cake walk, to the traditional Catalan forms promoted by the *catalanista* middle classes.⁹² It was a smooth transition, then, for Español, an organization with an *españolista* reputation playing an

⁹² Angel Smith, “*Sardana, Zarzuela or Cake Walk?: Nationalism and Internationalism in the Discourse, Practice and Culture of the Early Twentieth-Century Barcelona Labor Movement*,” in *Nationalism and the Nation in the Iberian Peninsula: Competing and Conflicting Identities*, eds. Clare Mar-Molinero and Angel Smith, 171-190 (Oxford: Berg, 1996).

international sport, to slide into a Lerrouxist outlook and obtain working class support within the city.

Football Outside the High-Profile Clubs

As important as the development of the great clubs was, less official teams and matches also spread across the countryside and infiltrated a wide variety of Spanish institutions. These quieter changes provide a window into how football was changing the everyday life of many Spaniards. The best example was the army, which was predisposed to military gymnastics as early as the nineteenth century and wholeheartedly embraced football as well. The sport first became popular at the Spanish army's four main military academies, the *Academias de Artillería, Caballería, Ingenieros, and Infantería*. All four academies had clubs that competed in the 1911 national tournament, and each occasionally sent teams to play over the subsequent five years as well.⁹³ Rivalries developed among these academies that spurred competition and the development of their own identities within the military. Even in Morocco, the scene of so many battles between the locals and the Spanish army, they played football once sporadic fighting temporarily ended in 1914. Alonso de Caso wrote that “en Marruecos, los soldados dedican sus ocios al fútbol, y luchan entre sí y contra los equipos civiles de las plazas de Cuenta, Tetuán, y Melilla.”⁹⁴ He even used a military analogy to relate football positions to his readers and compared the vanguard, main

⁹³ IEE, *Copa*, 28-29.

⁹⁴ Caso, *Fútbol*, 13.

army, rearguard, and fortress garrison to strikers, midfielders, defenders, and the goalkeeper.⁹⁵ This metaphor provided an illustrative analogy and suggested the greater usefulness of football as a sort of “mock war” by emphasizing its technical side and the tactical strategy involved. Through this explanation, the sport became more intelligible for military and civilian fans alike.

Finally, informal clubs appeared all over the country representing groups of friends, businesses, and even streets. These teams were simply friends who lived in the same neighborhood, or classmates in *colegios* and universities who enjoyed testing their skills and competing with one another with no goal of ever competing in a professional match. They played in local tournaments for the simple joy of the sport and their own physical fitness. To give one example, by the early 1910s in Bilbao there were a host of such small, informal teams that played around the city. A short, representative list includes: Bambino, Ledesme, Deportivo de Portugalete, Ariñ Ariñ, Escuelas de Ingenieros (cursos 4.º y 5.º), Amaika-Gastiak, Los Arlotes, Universidad de Duesto, ‘Estudiantes de Medicina, Euzco-Tarra, Euzkindarra, Colegio de Orduña, Instituto (cursos 1.º, 2.º, 4.º, 5.º y 6.º), Irá-barri, Escolapios (1. y 2. clase), Banco de Bilbao, Banco de Vizcaya, y Chauffeurs.⁹⁶ Some teams were of students, others bank employees, even one of chauffeurs who played football in their free time. A similar list could be made for every city in the country and it reveals how common an activity the sport had become for so many thousands of Spaniards.

⁹⁵ Caso, *Fútbol*, 27.

⁹⁶ “Sociedades Españolas: El Club Deportivo de Bilbao,” *Heraldo Deportivo* 2, no. 46, 25 August 1916, 280.

As suggested by some of the teams listed above, secondary schools and universities were virtual breeding grounds for football players in the 1910s because they were filled with youths who had free time. Many of the great stars of the 1920s learned football in their teens playing on university fields and being spotted and encouraged by school and university professors still interested in the pedagogical benefits of athletics. One of these was Ricardo Zamora Martínez, who became the dominant player of the 1920s and an internationally famous figure. In the early 1910s, Zamora started playing at his Barcelona secondary school, the Colegio de San Vicente de Paúl. At fourteen, he began spending his free time at the fields of the University of Barcelona and the president, Puig de Bacardí, invited him to play for the university's second squad on February 27, 1915.⁹⁷ By 1912, football was also common among Madrid's secondary schools and not just the ILE as during previous decades. The Colegio del Pilar alone produced a host of players who played for Real Madrid in the 1920s simply by embracing and supporting the activity among their students during the 1910s.⁹⁸ Football, therefore, became a common activity in schools and universities all over the country when even in the previous decade it had been a novelty. This demonstrated the influence of the ILE (even among its opponents), but football's acceptance into conservative, Catholic secondary schools also represented their greater resources. Rich Jesuit schools, such as the Colegio del Pilar in Madrid, were often located in newer middle-class neighborhoods with more open land around them for their students to use

⁹⁷ Francisco González Ledesma, *Zamora: mito y realidad del mejor guardameta del mundo* (Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, 1978), 33.

⁹⁸ Bahamonde, *El Real Madrid*, 31-32.

than the poorer state *institutos*. These changes meant that for the first time a generation of middle-class men grew up playing the sport and assuming it as a natural part of their lives. This was still a small percentage of the population as only youths from the lower middle classes and up had a chance at a secondary education, but it still brought significant change. For students who did make it into secondary schools, football became part of the everyday dreams of their youth and that made football in the next generation more important than it had ever been before.

State of the Sport by the End of the Decade

Over the course of the 1910s, the Spanish football world experienced radical changes. The numbers involved escalated rapidly, although they were still far from what they reached in the next decade. Stadiums with differentiated seating and standing room areas were built in every major region of Spain and sports newspapers and journalists became accepted segments of the national culture. The sport produced some of its first recognized public figures, like Pichichi, who walked the streets of their homes as heroes and were idolized by young boys. Football even built up enough public interest to cause disturbances and develop cells of interest within the Spanish military and the general public. In the first decade of the twentieth century and most of the 1910s, the members and supporters of each club were middle-class friends who aspired to play themselves and were completely a part of the club. However by the 1920s, the majority of club fans played no role in making club decisions, would never

compete on the pitch themselves, and significant numbers of them came from the working classes. At the core, the majority of a club's supporters had been reduced from participants to fans seeking entertainment. National and regional federations built up the stability that football needed to function as a mass-consumer activity and club identities and rivalries were established that drove the sport further into the mainstream of public life. All of these changes laid the foundations for the true mass consumer activity that the sport became in the 1920s.

These ever increasing numbers and the changes they brought, however, meant that more was at stake in football than ever before and they were not always positive or embraced by the progressive, international middle-class communities who had introduced the sport to the nation. Bluntly, making sport an economically successful mass activity meant welcoming the working class. By 1916, some members of the old guard were already attacking the excessively partisan behavior at football matches that they saw as undignified and plebian. Others charged that mass participation had begun to rob the sport of the original goal of physical education and a stronger Spanish race because while more and more fans watched the games, many of them did not play themselves and failed to reap any hygienic benefit. These same fans came to demand victory on the field, rather than appreciating the joy of playing. They saw their entrance fee as buying the right to yell, complain, and hurl insults at players because they were purchasing entertainment. Finally, the creation of stadiums, stars, and newspapers introduced the first harbingers of the ultimate antithesis of middle-class athletics:

professionalism. These developing problems were summarized wonderfully as early as 1916 in the pages of *Heraldo Deportivo*. After a number of incidents in the Basque Country, an article titled “Propaganda anti-futbolista” argued that:

Si las cosas continúan con ese camino, habrá que ir pensando en emigrar de los campos de fútbol o en adoptar alguna medida absolutamente radical que panga coto á este estado de cosas.

Es el fútbol uno de los pocos espectáculos, pero no decir el único, en que los protagonistas trabajan siempre gratis; esto lo sabe de memoria el público que asiste á los partidos, y por eso porque el que paga su entrada sabe que aquel dinero no ha de ir a enriquecer a ningún empresario, sino que ha de servir para satisfacer impuestos crecidísimos, para sufragar gastos de ferrocarril, y en proporción insignificante (cuando alcanza) para los gastos de sostenimiento de los campos de juego a fomentar la educación física de una generación, no se puede consentir que una parte, por exigua que sea, de ese público, dedique sus pesetas a adquirir un supuesto derecho á insultar, con la cobardía del anonimia que proporciona el grupo, la colectividad, a un equipo de jugadores, forasteros por añadidura.

Una parte superioridad, conseguida a este precio, no es digna. Obrar así es quitarse la razón cuando el que así se produce la tuviere. Desde el punto de vista exclusivamente futbolístico, por ese camino se va franca y decididamente á la formación de profesionalismo, o sea a la ruina del deporte.

Ese profesionalismo...prostituyendo el fútbol, permitiría, en cambio, que los campos de deportes, resolviendo a la inversa el arduo problema de la cuadratura del círculo, se transformaron en anillos de fiestas por desdicha llamada nacional.⁹⁹

This insightful article predicted what happened over the following decade. The sport of football became a mass spectacle whose goals were money, fame and catering to a working class audience, not the regeneration of the *patria* and other progressive middle-class ideals. The working classes flocked to the game and fundamentally changed how it functioned through the introduction of professional players and true mass media. The events of those battles and the development of a true spectacle, however, are another

⁹⁹ “Propaganda antifutbolista,” *Heraldo Deportivo* 2, no. 24, 15 January 1916, 17.

story entirely. None of that would have been possible without the institutions, standardization, and identities set in place between 1890 and 1920.

Epilogue and Conclusion:

Mass Consumerism Attained and Football Finds Its Place

The story of Spanish football was only just beginning with the arrival of the year 1920. In fact, most histories from within the sport start there because that year marked football's rise to the mainstream population's attention. That very achievement, however, marked the decline of the amateur middle-class ideals so central to football's introduction into Spain. In general, the 1920s was another period of great transition in the sport, which began as a burgeoning participatory activity in 1920, and ended as a mature mass-consumer industry in 1929. The decade was book ended by two great events, the 1920 Olympics and the "glorious spring" of 1929, and in between a decade of battles finally made paying football players legal within RFEF. As a result, by the dawn of the Second Republic in 1930, Spain had established an economically vibrant football culture that Francisco Franco would be able to use a decade later to distract the general public from the trials of life after the Spanish Civil War. Only through a brief discussion of these events can the importance of the institution-building of the previous two decades be fully understood.

In August 1920, the first Spanish football selection crossed the Pyrenees and headed to Belgium to play in the Antwerp Olympics. They left with no fanfare or

attention outside of the football community and nothing was expected of them. A little over a month later, their return was greeted by masses of cheering crowds. King Alfonso XIII even waited to greet them in San Sebastián, with all the accolades the nation could offer. The team earned this reception by coming in second place in its first international competition, shocking the world by only falling to the host nation Belgium. In 1920, this was the most success Spain had ever achieved at the Olympic Games. It filled the nation with a pride it had not felt in over twenty years and suggested that Spain could once again be victorious on the national stage. That team, and almost everyone involved with it, became legendary overnight. The team's play was lauded as having a uniquely Spanish intensity that the sportswriter Alberto Martín Fernández (Juan Deportista) dubbed "la furia española." Not coincidentally, this was a reference to the Spanish *tercios* that fought in the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and called upon Spain's glory days of empire and world power.

When each player returned to his own city, fresh crowds of fans turned out to welcome him home, fusing sport, fame and nationalism permanently to produce athletic heroes. The players on that team bridged the 1910s and 1920s and included the greatest stars of both ages. The captain was an ailing Pichichi just a year before his retirement in 1921 and two years before his death in 1922. It was the swansong of the greatest star of the 1910s, and ensured that his fame reached national proportions. The goalkeeper was a precocious teenager named Ricardo Zamora, who earned international attention for his play in Antwerp and went on to dominate Spanish football in the 1920s like a

titan. By the end of the decade, he had played a key role in forcing professionalization on the sport, made the first high-profile transfer from Barcelona to Madrid, starred in his own movie, and built a reputation that drew masses to see him from Budapest to Buenos Aires. The Antwerp Olympic team's success placed football soundly into the national spotlight and the Spanish selection never headed off to a match in obscurity again. The sport's elevated standing also translated directly into higher attendance figures and more club members throughout the country. Catering to these new masses, the first stadiums with a capacity over ten thousand were built, football newspapers sprang up everywhere across Spain, and the sport ascended to the level of bullfighting in the public eye.

The true rise of the spectacle, however, once again brought dramatic changes in the mid-1920s. As serious stadiums were built and huge numbers of people became club members, the pressure to win grew enormously. Regular success meant the clubs had to find and keep the best players, regardless of their social class. Players, therefore, gained individual importance and leverage for the first time-- and some like Zamora used it. By 1922, every player on F.C. Barcelona was a "brown" amateur and took money under the table or worked a dummy job. Within several years the same situation was common to almost every top-level club in the country. Similarly, the rising demand for the best players and the development of salaries to pay them meant that working-class footballers appeared on the pitch for the first time. Finally in 1926, RFEF accepted professionalism within the federation's rules and football players

became skilled workers. This landmark decision opened the path for full working-class participation in the sport as everything but owners.

Professionalism also essentially forced the creation of the Spanish football league, the last step to creating a modern football culture. As long as player salaries were limited, clubs could survive with only a few matches during local and national tournaments and individual friendlies as their base income, even with brown amateurism. But as the 1920s progressed, this became harder and harder as the cost of stadiums and player salaries spiraled. Some clubs like Español de Barcelona and F.C. Barcelona went on foreign tours, usually in Latin America, to raise money, but this was only a stop-gap measure. The answer was a system that provided for weekly matches that put fans in seats and provided a regular income to pay for the increasing overhead--a league.

RFEF and the leading clubs finally decided in 1928 on a format and organization for the Spanish Football League (La Liga). It began play in 1929 and was one of the four events of the great spring of the 1929 that launched Spanish football as a mature entertainment industry. The first big event came on February 3, when Ricardo Zamora carried Español de Barcelona to victory in the “final de agua” with over 30,000 fans screaming him on.¹ The match was played on a completely waterlogged pitch in Valencia because the ex-president of the Council of Ministers, José Sánchez Guerra, was imprisoned within the city. The mayor of Valencia and the national government

¹ Ibérico Europa de Ediciones, *Historia de la Copa* (Madrid: Ibérico Europa de Ediciones, 1973), Fascículo 1-9, 219.

were afraid that canceling the match would start a football riot, which could have become a political riot because tensions were high as the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera stumbled to its end. Zamora's triumph marked the greatest player of the 1920's only cup victory with the club he was most identified with (he won several more with Real Madrid C.F. in the 1930s) and drew massive interest across the country. The second "sport-changing" event came seven days later when the Spanish national league held its first weekend of matches and continued for three months in the spring of 1929. Although approached tentatively the first year, second and third divisions were soon added and the sport of football became entrenched in Spain.

The third great event came a few weeks after the start of the league, when Zamora became the first major player from a Barcelona team to be signed away by Real Madrid. This intensified the sporting rivalry between the two cities and spurred both clubs to see themselves in terms of the political rivalry between Catalonia and Madrid. The battles between the two "nationalities" now had a football battleground that became more and more important as each decade passed. The sale of Zamora also marked the commercial maturity of football. Real Madrid paid Español 150,000 pesetas for the rights to Zamora, a further 50,000 to Zamora personally, and upped his salary to 3,000 pesetas a month, making him one of the highest paid professionals in the country-- in any field.² It was one of the highest transfer fees in the world at that time and ushered in the modern age of professional football in Spain.

² Francisco González Ledesma, *Zamora: mito y realidad del mejor guardameta del mundo* (Barcelona: Editorial Bruguera, 1978), 109.

Finally, the greatest moment in pre-Civil War Spanish football history came on May 15, 1929. A national team, selected and coached by the Basque journalist José Maria Mateos and captained by Ricardo Zamora, defeated the originators of the game, England, in front of 40,000 screaming Spaniards at the Estadio Metropolitano in Madrid.³ The match sold out and supporters filled the streets of the capital listening to radios and reports on the game. Defeating the hallowed progenitors of the sport was extremely significant for Spanish football and the nation's confidence in itself. The victory suggested to Spaniards that they had a bright future with the potential to regain their pride and power. Two years later, this euphoria would be repeated, with similar celebrations in the same streets, when the Spanish Republic was announced on April 14, 1931. Collectively, the events of the spring of 1929 marked a football community that had come into its adulthood as both a cultural activity and entertainment industry. Football had become one of Spain's most modern and successful endeavors in the country, leading to a belief that the nation could succeed in political modernization as well.

In the end, football thoroughly changed the day-to-day lives of thousands of Spaniards. In the 1890s, the national climate of self doubt and the crisis of 1898 sent a generation of thinkers on a mission to discover what was wrong with their country. A wide array of answers were produced, one of them being that the Spanish race had degraded physically owing to unhygienic urban conditions and centuries of war and

³ Juan Deportista, *La vieja furia: una brillante temporada del fútbol internacional* (Madrid: Chulilla y Ángel, 1929), 25-30.

struggle. In response, some of the urban middle classes, who were professionally educated and had contacts in Europe, choose to include athletics and physical education in their day to day lives. They organized cells of the Federación Gimnástica Española and brought enthusiasts from across the country together for annual conferences. Spain's most progressive school and the educator of a generation of Spain's leaders, the Institución Libre de Enseñanza, introduced physical education into its program and other universities, secondary schools and military academies followed its lead (regardless of their political leanings). This new community justified itself on the grounds that it was reshaping the national body so that Spain would become physically strong again. The central argument of British muscular Christianity, that physical strength and mental ability had to be balanced to create the most capable people, was borrowed by Spanish thinkers. On that basis, significant communities developed in Barcelona, Bilbao, and Madrid that embraced new sports, such as football, swimming, tennis, and cycling, as a means to improve their physical hygiene and to mark themselves off as distinct from the working class.

This new athletic community was the incubator for Spanish football as the most popular international sport gradually became important in Spain as well. The first football clubs were simple groups of middle-class friends and office co-workers who became interested in that sport, in particular. They organized societies so that they could play themselves, and their clubs expanded and shrank during the first decade of the twentieth century as the small urban middle-classes became saturated with the sport.

During this early period, the great clubs of Spain, such as F.C. Barcelona, Real Madrid C.F., Athletic de Bilbao, Athletic de Madrid, and Recreativo de Huelva, were founded and became representatives of their local community, city, region, or social class. As clubs grew larger, however, they gradually transformed into companies, still run by the educated middle classes that founded them, but catering to a popular audience. In the 1910s, stadiums, stars, and sports journalists brought football into contact with more and more people, seating at matches developed class distinctions, and clubs marketed their identity to bring in fans. To make the sport an activity in which the paying customer knew what he was buying, regulatory institutions were established, such as RFEF itself and *colegios de árbitros*. By the end of the decade, football had the institutions and growing fan base that made explosive growth and a rise to equality with bullfighting as Spain's most influential form of mass entertainment possible in the 1920s.

The key to football's success lay in its versatility as an activity. In general, athletics were "European" and modern, which made them attractive to the progressive urban middle classes who wanted to regenerate Spain and become part of Europe's rapidly evolving culture. Football also provided them with a new form of conspicuous consumption that marked their social status and helped the middle classes to coalesce as a group. However, sport was also an ancient activity with a Greco-Roman legacy and traditional roots. This meant conservative leaders could embrace athletics as the modern version of the male role as fighters and providers. Similarly, sports teams

created identities that played powerful roles in organizing communities and regions, but those identities were not naturally inclined in any political direction. Club identities could be liberal or conservative, Catalan or *españolista*, middle class or working class, so the sport itself never came under political attack. This fluidity made football an ideal forum for communities to identify themselves through and develop mock-battles against “eternal rivals.”

Beyond local identities, athletics succeed because it satisfied the two inherent “eternal rivals” within it, pedagogy and consumerism. On the surface, the two were constantly at odds, from the Spanish athletic community’s foundation in the 1890s, until the outbreak of the Civil War. Pedagogical drives stood for middle-class participation, amateurism, and the fight to regenerate the nation. In comparison, consumerism epitomized working-class involvement, professionalism, and the fight to make a buck, but in reality the two needed one another. Without a consumer market, football would have remained a minor segment of Spanish culture that never penetrated into the mainstream. Boys would not have had heroes, the streets would have remained the domain of children playing at being bullfighters, and it was those thousands of boys playing football who actually attained the physical strength and health the *regenerationistas* in 1900 idealized. On the other hand, the sport needed the middle classes, with their pedagogical ideals and social standing within the nation. Amateurism brought football the governmental, political, and even royal support the new sport needed. Finally, for all their protestations in favor of pedagogy, regeneration,

and match decorum, football's commercialization benefited massively from the leadership of the urban professional middle classes. This group's leadership placed able and solvent businessmen at the head of clubs and these entrepreneurs gradually turned the teams of their youth into the businesses of their adulthood. Quite simply, Spanish football needed both sides to develop and flourish and it did just that. By the 1930s, it was a regular feature of Spanish culture on a par with bullfighting and has grown consistently ever since into one of the largest entertainment industries in the country.

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